Special Tribute Edition

PBASE

Magazine

January
2006

Francis Toussaint
1945 to 2003

Plus inside:
An Exclusive
Michael Reichmann
Interview. page 8

and much more inside

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Editorial Notes

WHICH OF MY PHOTOGRAPHS IS MY FAVORITE? THE ONE I'M GOING TO TAKE TOMORROW. -*IMOGEN CUNNINGHAM, "INTERVIEWS WITH MASTER PHOTOGRAPHERS"*

COVER PHOTO BY THE LATE FRANCIS TOUSSAINT
DESIGN BY GARY BLANCHETTE

FROM : The Editor's Desk

A very happy holiday season to all our readers around the world. It's been a premature winter here in Maryland – hope the weather in your part of the world is better.

To be very honest, it's been tough getting this issue out in time. There are two reasons for that – first, my work life got really very hectic and second, 'tis the holiday season ! Before we knew it, we were down to December, scrambling to get everything together for a timely release. But we are glad we did it in time !

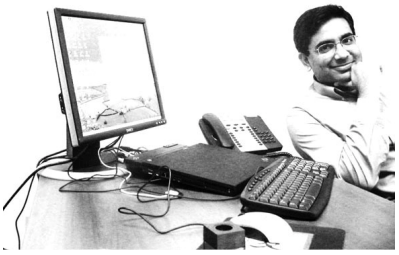
You will notice some changes in this issue. First, we have introduced a new section called the 'Culture Cauldron' – here we plan to feature unique cultures of the world and hope that our readers participate by writing vibrant articles about places and people they love which we can feature in our future issues. Also, we have decided, at least for now, to discontinue our Challenge section. The reason is simple – it is too much of a headache for us to track the challenge and manage entries effectively. Our past two challenges have been very successful and in this issue, we would like to close the challenge section by presenting the results of challenge #2 (Visually Effective Portraiture by Chuck Gardner).

One of the big 'goof-ups' we had in Issue #3 was with the selection of the 'MS Trebuchet' font – it seems that font was disastrous for our Apple/Mac readers and resulted in a lot of irate emails about this problem. Sorry about that – we don't use Macs, so we can only learn from our mistakes the hard way. Hopefully this issue should be fine since we are back to Arial.

Another input we received from several readers is that though they wanted to contribute, there were concerns that they were not *pro* enough to author an article good enough to be featured. Folks, this is a magazine *for the users by the users*, so to speak. Taker a look at this issue, where *Scubalex* writes about underwater photography – a hobby of his. *Scubalex* showed interest in authoring such an article and we worked together on a few iterations to present a user perspective to our readers. While we need to ensure that the article featured provides enough relevant information, we certainly do not expect each article to be written by professionals with decades of experience in those fields!

RESULTS OF THE USER POLL:
In the last issue, we asked our readers if they would be willing to subscribe to a printed version of the PBase Magazine (at a price that is break-even for us). Around 70% said "Yes" while the rest 30% said "No". However, the total number of people who responded were around 200 or so, which still does not bring us to the number we need to make sure we don't lose money with printing (and that number is 3000 subscribers). So, we are going to continue with only the online version till either a) We get very rich by inheriting millions from an old aunt we never knew of, or, b) We actually hear from 3000 people willing to subscribe. Either way, the online version will *always* be free to download.

The Editorial team is pretty much the same as it was the last time. *Energetic Eric* is back as the co-editor for this issue and has been threatening to do something very different for the 'Parting Shots' section (towards the end of the magazine). Wanda, Gary and Larena continue to toil away through their holidays – thanks all!
We hope you enjoy this issue and wish you a wonderful 2006 and beyond. Cheers!



~ Arjun Roychowdhury
www.pbase.com/arjunrc

PBASE-PHOTOG:Francis Toussaint

This section is dedicated to the memory of the Late Francis Toussaint, one of the most popular photographers on PBase. Francis passed away in 2003, leaving behind one of the finest galleries of France as seen by a Frenchman, which is quite different from the glitter of lights seen by a tourist. Even as of today, people continue to post comments in his guest book, describing how his photography inspires them to this day. When we started this section, we had limited information about Francis as a person and requested people to come forward to tell us more about the person, if possible. A big thank you to all those who responded. We eventually managed to get in touch with Marie-Annick Toussaint and later, Maguy Toussaint, thanks to the efforts of Frederic Cholin, who volunteered to act as an interpreter for our French – English email exchanges. We would also like to thank Jim Wickless, Juli Valley and Christopher Brooker for all their help. Finally, to the Toussaint Family: Thank you for corresponding with us in this difficult time– he will be sorely missed in the PBase community and beyond and his photography will continue to influence for a long time to come.

It is only appropriate that the last photo Francis Toussaint uploaded to his PBase website was of the Eifel Tower in Paris; a city he cherished on par with the camera he used to photograph it. The photo is in a gallery labeled "recent." The gallery is an eloquent collage of

photos ranging from people to places to things. Click. A young girl is captured with binoculars in her small hands. *Click*. A woman grinning with a camera raised to her chin. *Click*. The rear of a Ferrari. *Click*. The glass pyramid at Le Louvre. *Click*. A cow lonely on a field, that he entitled "Martigny." It is that empty feeling that the inner world of PBase felt when Francis stopped posting early February 2003.

In 2000 Francis put down his camera for a year to undergo an operation and then was back in business till early 2003 when PBase members stopped receiving responses for the messages they sent to him. Toussaint's absence from the photography community is greatly noticed.

While limited information is known about his personal life, those who were friendly with him say he was in his mid-fifties and a retired engineer who had a passion for Renaissance art. Jim W. Wickless corresponded with Toussaint regularly for two years and met in 2003 in Paris. He recalls that *"in person, he was an elegant man," and describes him as "articulate, generous in praise and somewhat shy."*

A recent occupant of space in the "Popular Gallery" section of PBase, his own guestbook is still busy as people leave comments reminiscing and complimenting his art.

Lisa Feuer wrote, *"I've always loved your work, still do....will keep you in my list of favorites. I know you are bringing beauty to where you are now, just as you brought it to us here."*

People say that the first time they saw his photographs they were swept in, inspired, speechless, discouraged based on their own ability, or did not know where to begin looking because it was all phenomenal work. Earlier posts on his guestbook suggest that Toussaint

PROFILE

NAME: FRANCIS TOUSSAINT

WEBSITE: WWW.PBASE.COM/FRANCIST

FROM: FRANCE

PHOTOGRAPHY STYLE: LANDSCAPE, PEOPLE,CITY

EQUIPMENT: CANON 1D, D30

HIS WORK

was constantly exchanging notes with his fellow photographers and always willing to share his bank of knowledge. Bob Rhéaume said he had a "gracious and sensitive soul with a powerful and unique talent."

Toussaint was a French native and loved the land he knew so well. It was commonly recognized that his best photographs were taken in Paris at night. He actually inspired others to come and photograph France.

Chris Brooker was one of those who made vacation plans with two things on his mind: a Canon 20D and Francis Toussaint. As he ventured around Honfleur, France he would wonder *"what Francis would be noticing. What would catch his eye? Would it be the texture on the face of the building being emphasised by the soft low sunlight, the reflection on the water of the buildings and the boats, or something else?"* While Brooker wishes he had a correspondence with Toussaint before he passed away, he knows that he is a better photographer today, because of the Toussaint photographs that live on.

And maybe that is what this is: a celebration on life. Francis Toussaint never uploaded a photograph that was not interesting, rich in color, simplistically complicated, and full of life.

Rhéaume might say it best: *"His photos are overfilled with the beauty and humanity in the world around him, and they reveal the soul of an artist combined with the skill of a master craftsman."*

"I met Francis first in 1993 at La Defense (business district) of Paris, when he was working for Total - a French oil company where I too am employed.Then we met again in 1995-97 in Buenos Aires where he was my boss. We both were working in the Total argentina subsidary. I left for Venezuela, and we met again in 1998-2000 when he was assigned there too. In 2000, he took one year off from work due to personal reasons.
We met again in 2001 when he was working in La Defense. In fact, he even attended my wedding."

~Fredric Cholin

From Chris Brooker:

Francis Toussaint

The reason I joined PBase over two years ago was that I had a few photos of the ships I had served on when I was in the merchant navy back in the 60s. I had not been able to find other pictures of them on the internet so I wanted to make my photos available to any other interested parties.

I began to look at other peoples' photographs, the starting point for which was "Popular Galleries." Very soon I found the work of Francis Toussaint. Not only was his work extremely popular, but it contained many galleries of places that very much appealed to me.

I thought his photographic skill was outstanding. He was able to include his own style into his views of places that almost stamped his name within the shot. I looked at his work again and again. More recently I noticed that he had not added to his galleries. I imagined that he was inundated with comments and was busy doing other things. I therefore felt that I could not ask him about his photos.

My own photography had improved somewhat during my year of PaD. This year I hoped that a change to a better camera combined with a real effort to use it properly would show further improvement.

When the time came to choose a location for our autumn holiday, I knew that I wanted to go somewhere where I would have ample opportunity for photography. Where better than two weeks in northern France? (Not too far to go from our home just outside London.) We looked on the internet and found a house in Honfleur, Normandy. It was one of the towns so beautifully photographed by Francis. Normally we choose somewhere isolated to stay so we can enjoy the peace and quiet of the countryside. This time I wanted to be in the centre of town so as to be able to pop out to the harbour to catch a sunrise or to nip down to have a look at the night life after a day out.

On the evening before we went away I was looking at the Canon 20D forums on DP Review and saw an article that interested me on the best way to shoot night scenes. In an answer, I was very shocked and saddened to see that the writer spoke of "The Late Francis Toussaint."

We arrived for our two weeks holiday in Honfleur at an elegant house in which Napoleon is said to have stayed. It was only a three hundred yards from the harbour and was perfect for following in Francis Toussaint's footsteps.

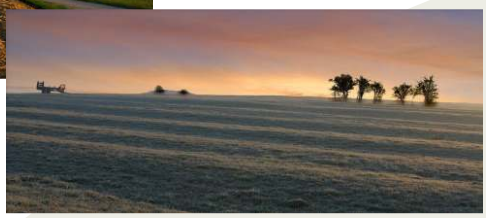
While there I went down to the harbour every day, sometimes as many as three times. I walked round or just stood and looked. I saw the sun rise and observed how the light is different with the changing weather; how the colours blend as the minutes before and after sunrise pass. I tried to ask myself what Francis Toussaint would be noticing. What would catch his eye? Would it be the texture on the face of the building being emphasised by the soft low sunlight, the reflection on the water of the buildings and the boats, or something else?

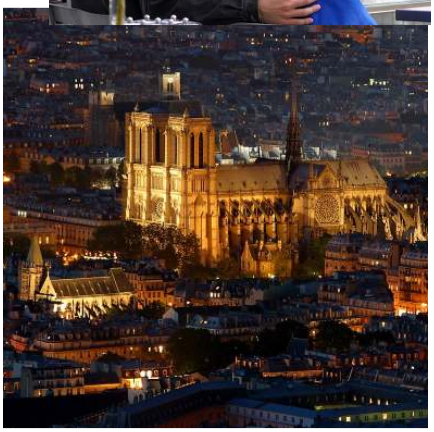
I took many photos of the places we visited but, of course, they are definitely not in the same league as those taken by Francis. I thought of him on many occasions as I walked around with my camera.

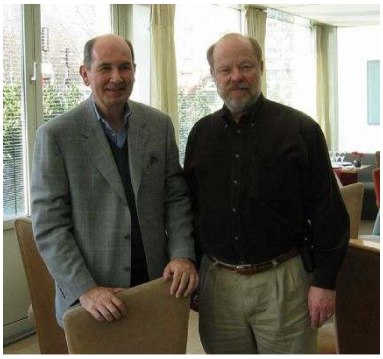
Having seen his lovely photographs and now having visited some of the locations, it may be that my photographic eye has improved just a little. I hope so. I know I wish I had told him how much I enjoyed his pictures when I had the chance.

Thank you Francis Toussaint, your photographs will be enjoyed for a long, long time and I hope others will follow in your footsteps and remember you.

~Chris Brooker







I spent several months "lurking" on Digital Camera Review before I put my name and comments on the samples and galleries forum in March 2002. Francis Toussaint was one of the first photographers to draw my attention. To say that he made beautiful images was like saying Frank Sinatra could sing. There was a precision about his work but an easiness and gentleness as well; it was a "look", I suppose "the Francis Toussaint look". Over the next two years I made regular comments on his posted images and, being a frequent traveler to France, I was able to relate my own recollections of the scenes to his images. On this common love of photography and of France our friendship began. We communicated regularly by e-mail as well as on the S&G forum and in 2003 we arranged to meet in Paris for lunch. We met at a lovely restaurant on the Place de la Bastille. In person, he was an elegant man, articulate, generous in praise and somewhat shy. We spoke in both English and in French, his English being much better than my French. We spoke about the work of our fellow forum members and, of course, compared favorites. He had just purchased the Canon 1D and he complained about its "brick-like" feel but was looking forward to trying it out. For a man of such sensitivity he did not openly reveal much of himself.

What little I know about Francis was gleaned over two years time. His artistic work is the window to Francis, the man. His images could be illustrations in photography textbook. He followed the classic rules of composition and lighting, and chose a wide array of subject matter. It's not surprising to learn that Francis was a retired engineer, a single man in his middle fifties, who had traveled the world and learned the languages of his destinations. In lieu of compulsory military service he taught school in southeast Asia. His passion was renaissance art and he was fascinated by the ability of the artists to make it appear that light was emanating from within the canvas. He sought to achieve the same effect in his photographic images and while most of us have photographed backlit flowers and leaves, Francis could make a streetlamp look like it was going to burn a hole in the computer screen. His night scenes of Paris are among his best.

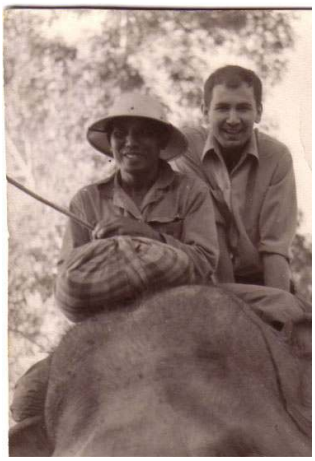
(image: Left to Right: Francis, Jim)

~ Jim W. Wickless

Plains of vosges

Toussaint Family House

Remembering Francis: From the Toussaint Family



Thanks to Marie-Hélène Raletz and Rob Davies for translating this letter.

Francis was born on April 11th 1945 in Nancy. His father, a Belgian, is a food wholesaler. His mother, a Frenchwoman, was dedicated to the upbringing of her seven children, of which Francis was the sixth born.

Along with his three brothers & sisters, he spent a happy and peaceful childhood amidst a very close-knit family. Distractions were scarce during this post-war period, in this small village of about a thousand inhabitants (Martigny-les-Bains, a former spa nestled in the Vosges plains).

Our parents were always with us and anxious to keep us as busy as possible. There was a lot of reading (our family library was well stocked), projection shows (Dad bought a *magic lantern*) as well as a lot of time spent on photography. The family bathroom doubled up as a photo-lab and a dark-room where parents and children alike would be busy around basins, enlargers and other equipment. We used a Zeiss Ikon then and spent a lot of time with developing and enlarging our photos.

Is this what kindled Francis' passion for photography? Maybe. Francis was a perfectionist at what he did (we used to secretly go and salvage his allegedly "messed up" photos from the garbage can)

After a tranquil primary school period, Francis became a pupil at the Saint Joseph d' Epinal Institution (1956-1963). He left it with a Bachelor's Degree in Mathematics. During this period, in addition to photography, he was devoted to scouting, and organising outings and camps, in his free time. At the start of the 1963 school year, Francis joined the Institut des Arts et Métiers (ICAM).in Lille. In May 1968 he graduated as an Engineer. He then left for Laos, in a co-operative venture, and taught for 2 years in Paksane.
In 1970, he joined the Schlumberger Company, and was sent to Kuwait, Iraq, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Oman, Iran, Indonesia, New-Guinea, Japan, and finally Paris. During the course of 1979, he joined "Total" in Paris, then, until 1998, he was stationed in France, Indonesia, Venezuela, Paris, Argentina, and again Venezuela. 1999 was a sabbatical year, during which he bought a house in Saint Lucy (Florida) and he devoted his time to golf and piloting small aircrafts.

In 2000, the first attacks of his illness necessitated a serious surgical intervention and he returned to Paris. His health suffered, despite the treatment administered. As it became more invalidating, Francis found it increasingly difficult to carry his heavy cameras. Nevertheless, he refused to give up his daily routine. He would be up at daybreak to capture sunrises and late to bed so that he could touch up his presentations and upload the photos to his site.
He brought thousands of images illustrating the life of tankers, as well as the customs of the numerous people whose lives he had shared, over many years, back from his journeys.
Christmas 2002 found us reunited once again in Martigny. Dad, brothers, sisters, nephews & neices, all together for the last time –only that we never knew it was to be our last meeting then.

On the morning of 10th February 2003, Francis left us, leaving us totally devastated.
His friends would agree, describing Francis in a few words - "he was a diffident yet optimistic person, a perfectionist and a lover of the new personal technologies".

As a professional he was competent and trustworthy, a cut above the average.
He always, throughout the years, participated in the energy and joie de vivre of his little circle of friends. As far as memories go, I have thousands of them; Francis was always a true friend, always smiling, in his private life as well as in his professional life. I don't know of anyone who had reasons to dislike him.

I will always remember his surprise the day he found out, through hundreds of messages, about the success of his PBase site. His initial idea had been to simply use the Internet as a means of storage. I do hope you will preserve this site which had been admired by many.

There, we, his family, have nothing more to add.

Thank You, all of you, in this large family of photography without borders.
You are restoring our courage, by keeping his work alive through your moving testimonies. And, a 'Thank You', to the PBase Magazine for dedicating this section to Francis.

Images (top to bottom): In Laos, Under Snow in Nagoka (Japan), In Laos, 100th birthday of Dad, Family lunch in the garden

PRO-CORNER:Michael Reichmann

Michael Reichmann has been both a professional photographer as well as avid amateur for more than 35 years. He is a Contributing Editor to Photo Techniques magazine, as well as publisher and primary author of The Luminous Landscape web site – the world's largest non-commercial site devoted to photographic education. Michael is also co-publisher and host of The Video Journal, the world's only quarterly DVD-video magazine about photography. The Video Journal is now in it's fourth year and has subscribers in more than 40 countries world-wide. Michael teaches field workshops and seminars around the world. His recent workshops include trips to Iceland, Costa Rica, Bangladesh, China and Antarctica, as well as extensive work in the USA and Canada. He is a frequent invited speaker at conferences worldwide. Michael's prints and portfolios are found in private as well as public collections in Canada, the U.S., and abroad.

INTERVIEWED BY: SHAY STEPHENS

PBase Magazine: What kind of equipment will we be using ten years from now ?

My crystal ball is very fuzzy. Rather than look out that far which I think will never be accurate, I think I'd rather look at the trends we are seeing now. The jury is out now on whether Canon's push with Full Frame (FF) is going to bring the whole industry in that direction or whether it will just remain as a high end solution.
Nikon doesn't seem to have any interest or ability in offering a full frame at this stage - there is an issue related to lens mount which Canon addressed around 15 yrs ago when they switched from FD to EOS mount. What you will see is a bifurcation in the industry with Canon and one or two others going the FF route as FF chips become less expensive but others like Nikon will stick with reduced frame sizes and I think that is fine.
The endless debates will continue while there will be two different approaches in the market place. I think the sony R1 really points to an interesting direction where it may change the opinion of many that a digicam is an inferior breed to DSLRs. My background includes a previous assignment where I shot film production for stills and TV and one big problem was of noise (shutter, not sensor noise) – this is one example of where shooting with a digicam is ideal.
In this field (TV, theatre, film) people need to have absolutely silent cameras and now with the quality of the R1 and the fact that it is absolutely silent , makes this a very interesting trend.

The other part of the equation is Medium format (MF). The MF market is still very strong even though pricepoints are high. Lots of pros need that kind of image quality and size and will continue to pay for it.

The trends I see above will continue till the next 3-4 years. Oh – and we will run out of steam for the Mega Pixel race – which will likely saturate at 10-15mp for DSLRs, 10-12mp for high end Digicams (like the R1) and 25-40mp for Medium Formats.

PBM: Do you see a trend in aspect ratios ? do you think we will use 3:2 or 16:9 in future ?

The panasonic Lumix DMC-LX1 shows an interesting path towards 16:9 but i think it will never be more than a niche. If you look at film photography, you have wide aspect, panoramic cameras and so forth. But main stream will probably be in 4:3 or 3:2 ratios. Some people get hung up on aspect ratio - I will just crop to what I want. For years I shot Medium Format square - the image dictated how it would end up being cropped. The nice thing about digital is that it frees us up from certain film constraint we had, like locking up to a 35mm negative frame.

PROFILE

NAME: MICHAEL REICHMANN

WEBSITE: WWW.LUMINOUS-LANDSCAPE.COM

FROM: BORN IN ENGLAND, GREW UP IN MONTREAL, LIVES IN TORONTO

YEARS AS PHOTOGRAPHER: SINCE 1954

PHOTOGRAPHY STYLE: NATURE, LANDSCAPE, WILDLIFE

EQUIPMENT: 1DS MKII, 5D, 15 CANON LENSES, CONTAX 645 WITH 6 LENSES, PHASE ONE P25 BACK, EPSON 4800 FOR PRINTING

MR's CRYSTAL BALL:

" Nikon doesn't seem to have any interest or ability in offering a full frame at this stage"

"The Medium Format market is still very strong even though pricepoints are high. Lots of pros need that kind of image quality and size and will continue to pay for it."

"We will run out of steam for the Mega Pixel race – which will likely saturate at 10-15mp for DSLRs, 10-12mp for high end Digicams (like the R1) and 25-40mp for Medium Formats."

"The panasonic Lumix DMC-LX1 shows an interesting path towards 16:9 but i think it will never be more than a niche. If you look at film photography, you have wide aspect, panoramic cameras and so forth. But main stream will probably be in 4:3 or 3:2 ratios"

PBM: You wrote in your *website "I am constantly amazed at how some of my best works exhibit one or both of a couple of characteristics. That is, 1) I don't think much of the shot when it is taken and 2) that I overlook them the first time I sort through my files"* Why do you think that is ?

When I take a photo, obviously there was something there that captured my attention and made me think about it or care about it enough to bring up the camera to my eye and press the shutter – be it a spontaneous, unplanned instant or a pre-meditated, well planned tripod mounted occasion. When I preview a small image on my camera LCD, there may be an image within an image that may be hiding in there which I miss during a quick preview. Maybe by processing it to B/W or cropping it relative to its original frame this hidden image may just pop right out. Also, when I come back after an assignment I am eager to work on the A-list images (those that jump out immediately) - then I will go back a second or third time (sometimes two to three months later) and ask myself *"why did I photograph that" ?* There has to have been a motivation and very often I will find something that is hidden that I did not see before. It's a little bit like going treasure hunting when it comes to going back to old images just to look at what might be there.

PBM: You also wrote in another article – "*I would much rather photograph animals in the wild so as to show them in context - in other words, landscapes with wildlife".* Would you consider yourself a 'landscape photo journalist' of sorts ?

(Laughs) - Thats an interesting phrase. I consider myself a photographer of things that interest me. My original career was of a photo journalist - I made my living as a photo-journalist for fifteen years and now since ten to fifteen years I've been very passionate about landscapes. But wildlife also fascinates me - the natural world fascinates me in general, and I find there are several interesting technical challenges in photographing wildlife that stimulates me. But I have to ask myself this (I guess any wildlife photog needs to ask himself) :
"Does the world need another photograph of a lion ?"
The answer is probably not - we really do have enough and yet, to me the challenge is to find a new way to interpret what is already a cliched subject.

If you look at my wildlife work, what you will frequently find is the animal itself tends to be relatively small in frame and I tend to show it in context of its environment. So to me I guess it's landscape with creatures rather than just a photograph of the animal - I am not interested in animal portraiture.

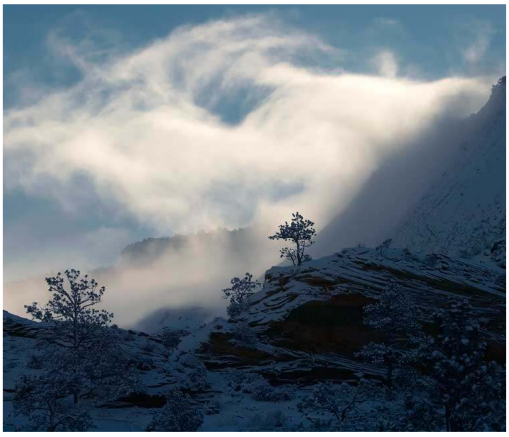
"I am constantly amazed at how some of my best works exhibit one or both of a couple of characteristics. That is, 1) I don't think much of the shot when it is taken and 2) that I overlook them the first time I sort through my files"

"When I come back after an assignment I am eager to work on the A-list images (those that jump out immediately) - then I will go back a second or third time (sometimes two to three months later) and ask myself "why did I photograph that" ? There has to have been a motivation and very often I will find something that is hidden that I did not see before"

"To me I guess it's landscape with creatures rather than just a photograph of the animal - I am not interested in animal portraiture"

PBM: How much do you think the other senses or emotions play in the photos that you take ?

That is an interesting question because I am just preparing a presentation for the people who are going to be on my Antarctic workshop that is beginning this December. One of the things I've been writing about is that you can't effectively photograph something that you don't care about and if I care about something that means I think about it – and I think that enhances my ability to photograph. I am a nature, wildlife and landscape photographer at this point in my career simply because I love the natural world. I'd be up somewhere 15,000 feet, having taken two days to get there, camping and pulling my luggage up the side of a mountain just to be there at sunrise - and the motivation of course has been photography, but the reason I am there is for my love of nature - if I did not care about it I wouldn't do it.
I think you have to feel, think and have an involvement with your subject for the images to be more than just casual ones and to be able to show any intensity.



PBM: What do you think it takes for the photographer to 'get it' or 'get that involvement'?

Lots of photographers wander around aimlessly trying to do different things. What I would suggest is that they should first think about what in life are they passionate about. Is it Skiing? Is it automobile racing? It is architecture?

There has to be something that makes you cross the street, so to speak and those are the things that if they become the subject matter for your photography will end up being more successful just pursuing a broad crosssection.
There was a period in my career, when I was in my twenties where I was passionate about F1 auto racing. At that time, I thought I did a lot of good work which was widely published simply because I was interested in it. Over time, my interest faded and if someone tells me today to cover a Formula 1 race, I could do an adequate job but with nowhere near the passion, involvement and enthusiasm compared to the days when I was emotionally plugged in.
Photograph things you care about to start with. It could be even as simple as photographing your family. Lots of people make fun of those who take photographs of their pets (cats,dogs).
I think that is fair game. If they are passionate about it, they will strive to continuously improve in that field and those improvements in technique and skill have a wide application. Do a good job , put yourself out, try and produce the best darn

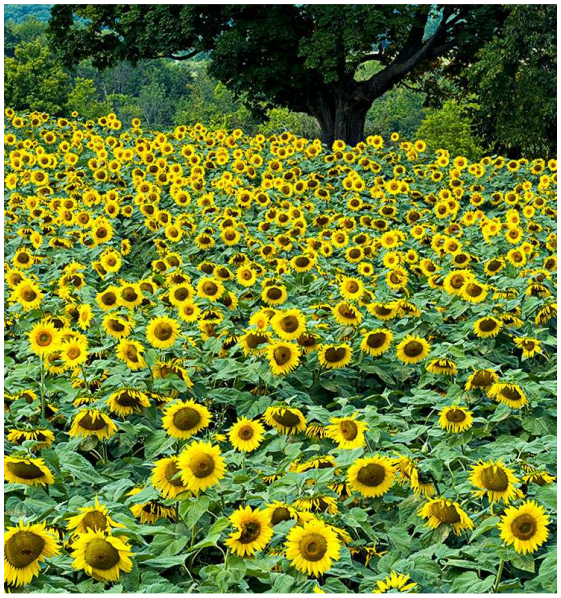


photo that anyone has ever made of a cat.

PBM: What do you think about the notion of limiting the tools available for the photographer - like lighting, post processing and such. Are these handicaps or do you think such limits have a benefit for the photographer ?

I don't know that I would like to take a position one way or the other. I think that a good photographer, given an assignment, would come back with something worthwhile given the constraints that have been put on him. On the one hand, to use a cliche, the photograph is created by the photographer not the camera. On the other hand, I am a firm believer of not using the most expensive possible tools but the most appropriate tools for the job.

That brings me back to my previous comments on the Sony R1 - I haven't tested it yet *[ed: This interview was conducted over the phone in early December 2005, just a few days before MR got to review the R1 hands-on]* but just looking at the camera on the surface, if I was today doing what I was doing twenty five years ago, shooting film for television and theatre, I'd be using a good quality digicam like the R1 simply because they are absolutely silent. So obviously, I may not have had the best lens money could buy, or the best focal length, wide aperture, good high ISO and such to the greatest extent possible. But if someone handed me a 1DS Mark2 for the same job and said "Here is a better camera, use this", I'd say, "I dont care its a better camera. What do

PASSION:

"You can't effectively photograph something that you don't care about and if I care about something that means I think about it – and I think that enhances my ability to photograph"

"I am a nature, wildlife and landscape photographer at this point in my career simply because I love the natural world. I'd be up somewhere 15,000 feet, having taken two days to get there, camping and pulling my luggage up the side of a mountain just to be there at sunrise - and the motivation of course has been photography, but the reason I am there is for my love of nature - if I did not care about it I wouldn't do it"

you mean by better ? Is it silent ? No - therefore its not better". So maybe in many circumstances , the 1DsMkII is a better camera but a $700 digicam may be better camera for this particular purpose !

PBM: Exactly ! what's easier to use - An R-1 or a 1DsMkII in a sound blimp ?

(Laughs) - exactly. These are the kinds of very silly discussions you read on web forums where people obsess over technical nitti-gritties just because they can actually be measured.

But if these people were really photographers and had the experience of having to go out and produce images that put the bread on their table, what they would discover is that the best camera is not the most expensive or the fanciest, but one that is most appropriate for the job. If you are a mountain climber, you are likely not going to carry a Medium Format camera with a $30,000 digital back and big heavy lenses.
If you are a scuba diver you will carry something different. All the silliness that people get to should really be put to rest.

I am probably going to take the R1 to Antarctica with me – it's going to be my backup camera. I will also have my 1Ds with me but I will certainly not walk around with it all the time - its too big and too heavy.

PBM: What advice would you have for the photographers out there who struggle to produce compelling work ?

I would say one of the most important things is do not work in isolation. Go to art galleries, go to photographer galleries, shows and museums. Buy books or read them in libraries. Look at paintings, art and photographs! Understand where your work fits in. Photography has a history that is close to two centuries - there is a past history worth learning from and is a critical part in growing one's understanding of where you fit.

One of the things that frequently surprises me in my workshops is that everyone has heard of 'Ansel Adams', but how many people have heard about Ziegler, Zucker, Eugene Smith, Turner?
I could go on an on . Learn from the work of others, study the work of as many people as you can and learn from variety.

The PBase Magazine team would like to thank Shay Stephens for phone interviewing Michael for this issue. Shay is a successful professional photographer and was interviewed by us in this very section for our first PBase Magazine issue (Issue #1). More importantly, he is an all around great guy, both professionally and personally. Thanks, Shay !

ADVICE:

"Lots of people make fun of those who take photographs of their pets (cats,dogs). I think that is fair game. Do a good job, Put yourself out, try and produce the best darn photo that anyone has ever made of a cat"

"The best camera is not the most expensive or the fanciest, but one that is most appropriate for the job"

"I would say one of the most important things is do not work in isolation. Go to art galleries, go to photographer galleries, shows and museums"

"Learn from the work of others, study the work of as many people as you can and learn from variety"

Please email your comments and suggestions to magazine@pbase.com

CHALLENGE #2 RESULTS:

Visually Effective Portraiture

Please visit www.pbase.com/magazine/challenge_2 to see all the entries received for the PBase Magazine Challenge #2

1st Place Winner

Title: Young Debating Lama
Photographer: **Wendy Loo**

Web: http://www.pbase.com/libra1965

Please see here for Chuck's comments on her image

DESCRIPTION:

I have often heard of the debating lamas in Lhasa-Tibet where they would gather in a small garden courtyard to discuss and learn the Buddhist scriptures. To be able to shoot them in action was certainly an exhilarating experience especially for an amateur photographer.

There was 'human drama or facial/body action' everywhere. Imagine having more than 100 monks in their red-yellow robes within a small courtyard the size of a basketball court. To make a point, they have to 'slap their hands and storm their feet' standing in front of the listener who is sitting. Every time they did that, the dust from the ground would fly all over the place. As an amateur, I had no real experience trying to capture 'human facial expressions' in a crowded small place (besides the monks, there were a of dozen or so of tourists/locals). It was an unforgettable experience and this photo is one of my favorites as most of the monks are adults except for maybe 3 of them who are about 10-14 years old.

The smile with a set of perfectly white pearly teeth on the subject's face in turn gets me smiling every time I see this picture. The hint of the sun's glare reflected against his eyes reminds me of the state of 'enlightenment' through the eyes of a young Tibetan Buddhist monk. All of us can achieve 'enlightenment' if only we "open our eyes and ears" to the different ideas or things around us.

ABOUT WENDY LOO:
I live in Singapore and share a passion for travel with my family and friends through the photos I take. I love capturing images of the local people I meet from my travels, especially when these are accompanied with a memorable story of how I met them.

CHALLENGE #2:

Challenge #2 details:

Topic: Visually Effective Portraiture

Judge: Chuck Gardner

Start: Oct 10, 2005
End: Dec 10, 2005

The Challenge #2 Theme:

Make a visually effective portrait which finds and accentuates the most flattering facial angle of your subject and eliminates potential distractions. Photoshop editing is permitted and encouraged to adjust tonality, but edited version should be accompanied by "before" (unedited) versions for comparison. NOTE: Choice of lighting is up to the photographer – you could use either natural lighting or studio lighting as you deem fit. All entries MUST be accompanied by a description of the setup and the thought process behind the portrait.

2nd Place

Title: Cool Dude
Photographer: **SamiUllah**
Web: http://www.brain.net.pk/~lectar

My name is Samiullah and I am from Peshawar, Pakistan. I am 23 and have just finished my MBA. I have a bachelor's degree in Computer Science and have implemented several business applications in the UAE, Pakistan and Afghanistan. In my free time I try to educate people on how to use the Internet. My ultimate aim now is to show the benefit of digitizing a firm and the things that they can do after going digital. I started photography seven months ago when I was working with my friend in creating a computer animation for a local contest. None of us knew anything about cinematography so we were not able to get the project done in time. Now photography has become my hobby and I love to express myself through it. The Canon powershot A520 is the first camera I bought and I am still learning more about photography everyday. PBase is one of the sites I regularly visit to learn more.

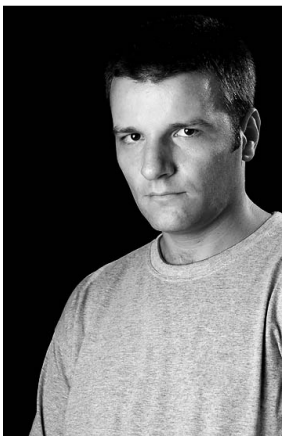
CHUCK GARDNER'S COMMENTS:

It's underexposed but the lighting on the face, facial angle, and juxtaposition of subject and background all add up to make it an effective image. I'd crop it on the bottom to shift the overall balance upward towards the face

3rd Place

Title: Girl with Ribbon
Photographer: **Dragan Trifunovic**
Web: http://www.photopink.com/

About Dragan:



I'm 35 and photography is my love since early school days, more than 25 years. I work in the TV industry as a video editor and animator for 10 years. Since I bought my first digital camera (Canon A70) few years ago I have been totally obsessed and I use most of my free time to shape my skills in photography and photo editing. Now I have some monthly income from photography to invest in new equipment and I really hope and wish to have my own studio one day.

CHUCK GARDNER'S COMMENTS:

This one is very effective as is: great eye contact. If you were to darken the hands slightly they wouldn't compete for attention with the face as much. Darkening the bottom of a portrait helps to guide the eye of the viewer to the brighter face and keep it there. It's a human perception trait. If the eye traverses a dark, unsharp area en-route to a brighter one it will not be tempted back there. In this photo the viewer will be initially drawn past the hands to the compelling eyes, but once they get tired of looking at them, they will be attracted away by the brightness of the hands and detail of the ribbon and rings. This illustrates an important point about hands and props: 1) Don't put them in the photo unless you want attention drawn away from the face, and 2) you can moderate the degree of attention they get by controlling their brightness and color / saturation

HON'BLE MENTIONS:

Moira (Giovanni De Martis)

Girl on Beach (Julian Kornacki)

Rachel on Bench (Francis Bartus)

Fun Portrait (Matt)

LEARNING: The Nature of Light by Ron Bigelow

It is very instructive to take note of what issues top photographers tend to write and talk about. For these are likely the issues that these photographers consider critical to their success. This being the case, the one topic that I see covered by top photographers, time and again, is the topic of light. The nature photographers often talk about seeking out certain light conditions or only shooting in specific types of light. The portrait specialists often discuss the lighting set ups and how it affects the final image. Even the photojournalists and travel photographers talk about trying to catch people in light conditions that best exemplify the people and the environments in which they live.
If light and its qualities are so important to top photographers, it would behoove us to examine light and understand its influence on our photography. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to look at light, its characteristics, and how it influences our images.

The Triple Nature of Light

Knowledgeable photographers will tell you that light has a triple nature for the photographer: color, direction, and quality. It is these characteristics of light that determine how our images turn out. It is an understanding and mastery of these characteristics that is often, at least partly, responsible for the best images that we see.

Color of Light

In 1665, Sir Isaac Newton was able to show, by using a double prism experiment, that ordinary, visible light is actually composed of seven colors (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet). We now know that visible light is actually a continuous color distribution that starts with red light at the long wavelength end of the spectrum (wavelength has to do with the electromagnetic properties of light and refers to the distance from one crest of the electromagnetic wave to the next; if that doesn't make sense, don't worry about it) and ends with violet at the short end. In reality, visible light is only a portion of the light spectrum (light continues with infrared at one end of the spectrum and ultraviolet at the other).
Pure, white light is composed of a balance of these colors. However, light is not always pure. Often, the color balance of the light has been altered. Most frequently, this occurs because one or more of the colors have been, at least partially, filtered out of the light. When this happens, the color of the light changes. Because of this, the light that we experience is constantly changing color all day long, and this affects the color balance of the images that we take. As covered in my article on advanced composition (http://www.ronbigelow.com/articles/adv_comp2/adv_comp2.htm) color affects the mood of an image. Consequently, the color of the light that illuminates a scene will impact the mood of the image and its ability to impart what the photographer wanted to communicate to the viewer in the final image. This works to great advantage for the knowledgeable photographer that uses his knowledge of light color to capture images where the color of the light is in harmony with the mood that the photographer wishes to create in the image. Conversely, the light often works to the detriment of the less knowledgeable photographer to contradict the mood that he intended to create or, at best, leaves him with an occasional, lucky image that impresses his friends but which he can not replicate due to his lack of understanding of the effect of the light on the emotional impact of the image.

Luckily, for photographers, we can simplify the color of light down to three basic categories of color: neutral light (no strong hue), warm light (tinted with yellow, orange, and red), and cool light (tinted with blue). We can simplify color down to these three categories because each of these categories has a different effect on how people respond to an image.

Figure 1: Neutral Light

Neutral light, which has no strong hue, is best used when a photographer wants the natural color of the objects to shine forth.
Figure 1 shows an image that was taken under fairly neutral light conditions. Under these conditions, the light did not add any significant colorcast to the image. This was desirable in this wave image. The white of the foam is critical to this image, and it was necessary to capture this white without any hue being introduced by the light. The use of neutral light allowed this to be done.
Neutral light is found away from both ends of the day (not in very early morning or in late afternoon). Light from a direct, overhead sun on a clear day may have a fairly neutral color. Photographers that wish to use neutral light need to beware of certain conditions. Heavy cloud cover will likely shift the color of the light toward blue. Also, shadows generally have a bluish tint. Light that is filtered or reflected in any way may pick up a hue. For instance, a photographer standing in a forest will likely find that the light has picked up a green hue from the leaves overhead. A photographer in a canyon with light reflected off the canyon walls will likely find that the light has picked up a color from the walls (probably a warm tone).
Warm light is good for creating inviting, dreamy moods in an image. People tend to associate warm light with feelings of comfort, friendship, and romance. The roaring fireplace that two

HIGHLIGHTS:

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lovers sit by casts a warm light on them. A husband and wife celebrating their anniversary eat dinner at a table illuminated by the warm, flickering light of a candle.

Figure 2: Warm Light

Figure 2 shows an image that was taken under conditions of warm light. At the time this image was taken, the sun had dropped low on the horizon and the light had developed a warm tone. This warm tone is most noticeable on the face of the cliff with the waterfall. The warm light gave the scene a gentle, enticing mood. The importance of the color of the light used to create this image can not be over emphasized. The waterfall in this image is the McWay Falls in Big Sur, CA. It is reported to be one of the most photographed waterfalls in the state. I have seen images of this waterfall from several professional photographers, and every single one of those images was taken in warm light conditions. In other words, for this and many other successful images, having the correct color of light is not something that is desirable; it is something that is mandatory.
Warm light is best found just after sunrise or just before sunset. This is because of the interaction of light and air molecules. Air molecules scatter the short wavelength blue light more than the long wavelength red light. Just after sunrise and before sunset, the sun is low on the horizon. This causes the sunlight to travel through more of the thicker air near the earth (the air gets thinner the higher one goes in the atmosphere). As a result, much of the blue part of the light is scattered. This leaves a warm light.

While the warmest light will generally occur within about a half hour of sunrise and sunset, the light can sometimes begin to pick up a warm tone a couple of hours before sunset (my experience has been that the light tends to lose its warm tone fairly quickly after the first half hour of sunlight in the morning). My experience is also that the late afternoon tends to produce warmer light than in the morning. Photographers that wish to use warm light need to watch out for clouds and shadows; both produce a bluish light.
Cool toned light is good for creating feelings of calm or cold. People tend to think of deep, calm lakes as being blue. A calm sky is usually blue. On the other hand, people also tend to associate blue with cold: ice may have a blue tint as well as the light of an early, winter morning.

Figure 3: Mixed Cool and Warm Light

Figure 3 illustrates the use of cool light. Actually, this image illustrates a mixture of light. The clouds low on the horizon display the very warm light of the last few rays of sunlight. However, the ocean has already fallen into the shadow of evening. The ocean is dimly lit by the sky above that has cast a cold, blue calm over the ocean. This contrast of light adds impact to the image. This image represents the dividing line of the day: the warm of the sun departing as the cold, ocean wind begins to chill the night air.

Cool light can often be found in the time between the first light of day and sunrise as well as between sunset and darkness. These twilight times often cast a soft, dim, bluish light over the terrain. Sometimes, a mixture of light is created at these times (as in Figure 3). Blue light can also be found under cloudy skies and in shadows.
Cool blue light is caused by the same phenomenon that causes warm light. Remember a few paragraphs back it was stated that the air molecules scatter the cool, blue light more than the warm, red light. This explained why the light just after sunrise and before sunset was warm, but what happened to all that blue light that was scattered? It was scattered into the sky. This is why the sky is blue. It is due to the scattering of the blue part of the light spectrum (this scattering happens all day long; it is just more pronounced during the very early and very late portions of the day).
During the twilight times, the sun is below the horizon. The landscape is illuminated by the sky alone. The light from the sky has a blue tint due to the scattered, blue light. This is also why the shadows are blue as they get most of their light from the sky rather than light directly from the sun.

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Color and Saturation

There is another aspect of color that is important to the photographer: saturation. From the photographer's point of view, saturation refers to the intensity of the color. A color that is very vivid is a saturated color. Colors that appear dull or washed out are unsaturated colors. From a technical viewpoint, saturation refers to how much white light is mixed in with the color. Saturated colors contain very little or no white light. That is why they are very vivid. Unsaturated colors have been diluted by the addition of white light.

Figure 4: Saturated Colors

Figure 4 shows an image with saturated colors. The colors are fairly vivid and pleasing to the eye. In particular, the reds, oranges, and yellows of the leaf stand out. The objects in the image are actually rather mundane; it is the saturated colors that define this image.

Figure 5: Desaturated Colors

Figure 5 shows what an image with desaturated colors looks like. In particular, the greens of the grass and bushes are relatively washed out. This is a result of the image being shot in unfavorable light (yes, I know better, but I was hiking through this area at mid day and decided to take an "I was here, too" shot).
Since color affects the mood and impact of an image, saturation becomes important. Often, photographers want rich, intense colors. Sunsets are an example of this. The best sunset images contain very saturated colors. Therefore, photographers need to understand what factors can be used to control saturation.
One of the biggest factors that affects saturation is time of day. Early morning and late afternoon generally provide more saturated colors than mid-day. If you look at the landscapes of some of the most successful photographers, you will find that most of their images were taken early or late in the day, partly, for this reason.

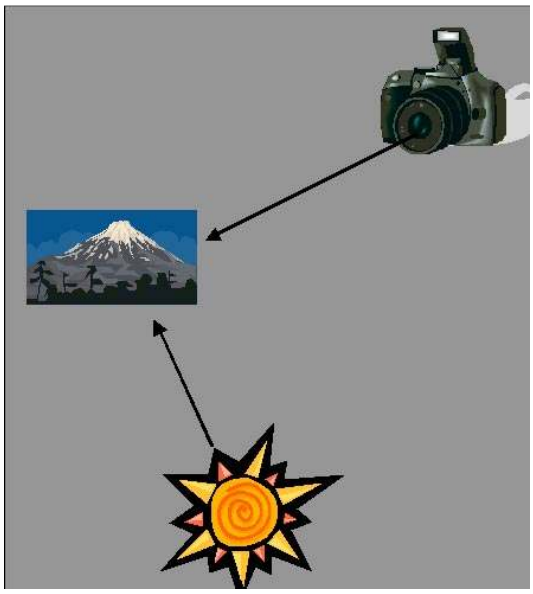

Figure 6: Optimum Polarizer Angle

A polarizer filter is another way that can be used, in many situations, to increase the saturation of colors. Part of the light that dilutes saturation is polarized light. Polarized light is light that vibrates only in one direction (this has to do with the electromagnetic waves of which light is composed). A polarizer can reduce the amount of polarized light and improve the saturation of the colors. However, a polarizer is not equally effective under all circumstances. A polarizer has the greatest affect when the camera is pointed at right angles (perpendicular) to the direction of the sunlight. Figure 6 shows the optimum positioning of the camera, in relation to the object to be photographed and the sun, for the maximum polarizer effect. As the camera moves away from this perpendicular position, the affect of the polarizer is reduced. If the light is coming directly from behind or in front of the camera lens, the polarizer will have no affect at all.

Polarizers can cause problems with wide angle shots. With wide angle lenses, the angle from the camera to the objects changes, relative to the direction of the sunlight, depending on where the object is located in the wide field of view. Thus, the polarizer will have a different affect on different parts of the wide angle image. A typical example of this is a wide angle shot of a landscape where a polarizer was used. The saturation of the blue in the sky may change across the sky due to this polarizer affect.
Another factor that can affect saturation is exposure. An image may get different amounts of

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saturation depending on how much exposure is given. For instance, photographers that use slide film often underexpose by about a half stop to increase the saturation of the image. The affect that exposure has on saturation varies depending on what film/sensor is used, the color, and other factors. This makes it difficult to predict the impact that changes in exposure will have on saturation. The best advice is to bracket the exposures. Then, pick the best image from the bracketed exposures.

Color and the Human Brain

When dealing with the color of light, certain matters need to be kept in mind. Probably the first issue is the human brain. It turns out that the human brain does not passively receive or passively process sensory information. Instead, the brain does a significant amount of data altering before it allows the human that owns it to perceive. Quite often, the altering that the brain does changes the reality that the human perceives. A couple of examples will illustrate this point. Years ago, the professor of a psychology class that I was taking in college talked about an experiment that had been done. A person was fitted with a special pair of glasses that turned everything upside down. Obviously, this made it very difficult for this individual to function -- everything the individual saw was upside-down. However, the individual did not have to endure the situation for very long. After a certain period of time, the individual's brain turned everything right side up again. In other words, the individual was receiving an upside-down image on the sensory cells in his eye, but the brain was inverting the image so that he would see correctly. The second example involves skiing. Years ago, I used to snow ski. I wore a pair of ski goggles that had a very bright yellow lens. When I would put the goggles on, all of the snow covered countryside would turn bright yellow. However, after skiing a short time, my brain adjusted the yellow color out so that everything was white again. In short, I was seeing through a yellow filter but the brain was adjusting the color to turn everything back so that it appeared normal.

As can be seen from this last example, among many other things, the brain adjusts the color that we see. The vast majority of the time, we are not even aware that this is happening. For instance, when you walk from a parking lot into a building, you are probably not even aware that the color of the light has changed significantly. For photographers, this creates a problem: the brain monkeys with the color we see. Thus, we do not always see color correctly. In particular, when dealing with warm or cool colored light, the brain functions on a principle of constancy. It expects the colors of objects to remain fairly constant throughout the day. If the color of objects changes during the day because the light that is illuminating them changes, the brain tends to filter out at least part of that color change (remember the yellow goggle story). As a consequence, the color that we see during times of strong warm or cool light tends to be less intense than the color of the actual light and, possibly, less intense than what the camera will see and record. For instance, a casual photographer may not be aware that the light has become warm toned in the afternoon until he gets his film back and discovers that his wife's skin has an odd yellow tone.

So, if we can't trust our eyes, what is a poor photographer to do? There are a couple of answers. The first answer is to stare. If you want to get a better idea of how the warm light will look to the camera, stare into the shadows until your eyes adjust. Then, look at the warm light. For a short period, you will see the warm colors more accurately. In order to see the shadows more accurately, stare at the warm light until your eyes adjust (never stare directly at the sun). Then, look at the shadows. (Galen Rowell, Color, Light, and the Magic Hour).
The second answer is to learn. The photographer must: 1) understand the color of light and what conditions produce what type of light, 2) understand how both the brain and the camera interpret that light, and 3) develop some experience in translating what he sees with his eyes to what the camera outputs. With this understanding and experience, the photographer will be able to anticipate how his equipment will handle the color of light.

Color: Getting it Right

Getting the color you want from either film or sensor is not always as easy as pointing the camera at an object and pushing the shutter release. Each film emulsion delivers accurate color only when used with ambient light of a certain color (e.g., there are daylight films, tungsten films, and films designed for other light sources). If there is a mismatch between the film and the light source, corrections need to be made, or inaccurate colors will result.
Digital cameras are a bit more flexible. They can adjust to different light sources. They do this by either calculating or estimating the color of the ambient light. However, most advanced digital cameras have more than one way to do this. The different methods may yield different results under some circumstances. While photographers need to be aware of these issues, the subject is too detailed to cover in this article. The matter will be covered in an upcoming article titled "White Balance".

Quality of Light

The quality of light is often described in terms of hard or soft light. These terms may seem a bit nebulous. If you tell a non-photographer that you took a picture in soft light, he will probably have no idea what you are talking about. Actually, there is a somewhat objective way to view hard and soft light. Hard and soft light can be characterized in terms of contrast, shadow detail,

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and dynamic range. In addition, although less objective, hard and soft light can be characterized in terms of the emotional response that each tends to create in the viewer.

Quality: Hard

Figure 7: Hard Light

Hard light is a very direct, harsh, often unflattering light.

Figure 7 is an example of hard light. This image was shot in the desert under the mid-day sun. The result is a rather unflattering image. The sunlit earth is very bright and the shadows hold little or no visible detail. This image may be of interest to someone who is interested in old cars or car remains, but it would not hold the interest of most other people.
Hard light has a very high contrast. This can be seen very well in Figure 7. The dirt in the sunlight is very bright almost to the point of being uncomfortable. The dirt that is in shadow is very dark. Furthermore, the dividing line between the sunlit and shadow areas is very sharp, almost knife like. At no point in this image is there a smooth transition from light to shadow. The changes are all abrupt.

Hard light tends to lack shadow detail. As can be seen in Figure 7, it is very hard to see any detail in the shadow areas under this hard light. One could bring out the shadow detail with some extra exposure, but that would make the sunlit dirt even brighter. This lack of shadow detail is related to the large dynamic range of hard light. Dynamic range is a measure of the span of tonal values over which a device (in this case a camera) can hold detail. In other words, it is the tonal distance from the darkest point at which the device holds detail to the lightest point. Dynamic range is measured in stops of light. When light is increased by one stop, the amount of light is doubled. (going in the other direction, it is cut in half). Color print film and the better digital cameras have a dynamic range of about five or so stops. That means that the brightest areas in which they can hold detail are about 32 times brighter than the darkest areas that hold detail (each stop is a doubling of light, so five stops = 2 X 2 X 2 X 2 X 2 = 32). Color slide film only has about three stops of dynamic range. Unfortunately, an environment illuminated by hard light can have ten or more stops of dynamic range. In other words, your camera can not capture all of the detail (unless you are shooting with black and white film some of which can have a dynamic range of around ten stops). In hard light conditions, either the highlights or shadows will likely lose detail when photographed in color. Generally, experienced photographers prefer to lose detail in the shadows rather than the highlights -- thus, the lack of detail in the shadows in hard light conditions.
Hard light generally creates feelings of harshness or starkness. Often, this is an uncomfortable feeling. This can work to the detriment of the photographer. For instance, a beautiful flower shot in hard light conditions will not look very attractive. Part of this is due to the harsh contrast and dark shadows. Another factor is the fact that hard light generally tends to desaturate colors. So, in addition, the flower will have washed out colors.

Figure 8: Hard Light

However, this does not mean that hard light should never be used. Hard light has its place. Hard light can be used to emphasize harshness or starkness. For instance, a photographer may choose to shoot a desert scene in hard light in order to emphasize the harsh nature of the environment. Figure 8 is a case where the photographer deliberately chose hard light to accentuate this desert grave and its harsh environment.
Hard light is created when a scene is illuminated by a small light source. Direct mid-day sun is a typical example. While the sun may be very large, it is also very far away and appears to be small to a person on earth. Thus, direct sunlight that is not filtered or reflected in any way tends to be hard. As a result, photographs taken in clear sky conditions during the day will exhibit the typical traits of hard light.

Quality: Soft

Figure 9: Soft Light

"The quality of light is often described in terms of hard or soft light. These terms may seem a bit nebulous. If you tell a non-photographer that you took a picture in soft light, he will probably have no idea what you are talking about. Actually, there is a somewhat objective way to view hard and soft light. Hard and soft light can be characterized in terms of contrast, shadow detail, and dynamic range. In addition, although less objective, hard and soft light can be characterized in terms of the emotional response that each tends to create in the viewer."

In many ways, soft light is the opposite of hard light. It can be a very diffused and flattering light.
Figure 9 shows a photograph taken in soft light conditions. This image required a soft light to create the mood the photographer wanted to capture. The image required the gentle blending of light into shadow that occurs among the petals. In addition, the colors are enhanced by the soft light.

Soft light has low contrast. The bright areas and shadowed areas tend to blend together more easily than in hard light conditions. The transitions between sunlit and shadow tend to be gradual, rather than the knife edge effect often seen in hard light.Soft light usually has decent shadow detail, as can be seen in Figure 9. This is due to the fact that soft light frequently has a smaller dynamic range than hard light. Under soft light conditions, a photographer has a better chance of capturing the entire dynamic range of the scene with his camera without having to sacrifice detail in the shadows.
Soft light tends to create a feeling of comfort. It is the type of light used most often in landscape photography to enhance the feeling of beauty in an area. In addition to the gentile blending of light and shadow, soft light usually produces more saturated colors than hard light.
Soft light is created by a large or filtered light source. A hazy or cloudy sky will produce soft light. Light reflected off of a surface often becomes soft. Light that is filtered by a lot of atmosphere is soft. This is one of the reasons that cloudy or even rainy days are good for flower photography. It is also one of the reasons that much of the best landscape photography is done at the beginning or end of the day. The light has been softened by the extra atmosphere that the sunlight must pass through at that time.

Direction

The last characteristic of light is direction. Specifically, it is the direction of the light with respect to the direction of the line from the camera to the object being photographed. There are three primary directions of light: front, side, and back. Each of these directions of light has it own characteristics and has an impact on the mood that an image projects.

Direction: Front

Figure 10: Front Light

Frontlight hits images head on (from the front or overhead). It is less used in good landscape photography and more frequently used in bad.
Figure 10 shows an example of frontlight. In this case, as is often the case with frontlighting, the light produces a rather uninteresting scene. As can be seen in this image, frontlight tends to produce flat looking images -- the texture of the objects tends to be minimized with frontlight.
Frontlighting is often found midday. At that time, the sun is directly overhead and tends to hit objects in a rather direct manner.

Direction: Side

Figure 11: Side Light

Sidelight is low angle light that hits objects from the side. It can be a very dramatic light.
Figure 11 shows the power of sidelighting. Had this image been shot in frontlight, the detail of the ripples would have been almost wiped out. An uninteresting white mass would have resulted. The sidelight brought out the detail of the dunes.
Sidelight is great for those times when a photographer wants to emphasize texture or shapes. In the case of Figure 11, texture was emphasized. In other cases, sidelight can be used to emphasize shapes. Sidelight also has an interesting affect on shadows; it causes the shadows to become very long. In some cases, these elongated shadows can be used to add drama or emphasize an object. In other cases, the shadows themselves become the center of interest.
Sidelight occurs when the sun is low on the horizon. This means that photographers can take advantage of side light early in the morning or late in the afternoon.

Direction: Back

Backlight hits objects from behind so that the light is shining toward the camera lens. It can also be a very dramatic light, but it can also create some challenges for the photographer.

Figure 12: Back Light

Figure 12 shows the use of backlight for a sunset shot. In this case, a silhouette was created of the rock and pine trees. Silhouettes are one of the most common types of backlit shots. In the case of silhouettes, the dynamic range of the image is too great for the camera to capture (the light source is very bright while the backlit, opaque objects are in shadow). Incapable of capturing all of the detail, the photographer will usually let the shadows drop into a detail-less darkness.

Figure 13: Back Light

Figure 13 shows another common type of backlight image. In this case, the photographer chose an object of interest that was translucent. Part of the light was able to penetrate the leaf. This produced a leaf that seems to glow from within. This light accentuated both the veins of the leaf and the contrasting colors.

Backlighting is great for creating images with a touch of the dramatic. In the case of silhouettes, form often takes on more importance than detail. While the use of backlighting with translucent images tends to emphasize detail. In either case, backlighting tends to create strong mood and can produce images that are hard to ignore.

Like sidelight, backlight usually occurs when the sun is low on the horizon, but backlight has the additional restriction in that the light must be shining toward the camera. This can cause a number of problems for photographers. First, light shining into the lens can create flare. This occurs when some of the light bounces around between the lens or filter elements. If the camera has a filter on it, removing the filter may reduce the flare. Second, digital cameras don't tend to deal well with bright light sources shining down the lens. In particular, when photographing the sun, digital cameras tend to produce bizarre banding along the edges of the sun. Switching to film may produce better images in this case. Lastly, the large dynamic range of backlit scenes may prevent the photographer from capturing detail in parts of the scene in which he desires to hold detail. In this case, the photographer may resort to one of the many methods used to handle large dynamic ranges (e.g., split ND filters, fill flash, or digital blending of images taken at different exposures).

The Magic Hour

Getting the right combination of color, quality, and direction of light in order to create a particular mood can be a bit challenging. Especially when you consider that different purposes and moods require different types of light. However, for one type of photography, the situation becomes easier. A large number of images are taken in the outdoors where the photographer wants to communicate the beauty of the natural environment and the animals and people within it. In this case, the best light is often a soft, warm, directional light that creates saturated colors and soft highlights and shadows. You might be thinking that it would be nice if you knew when you could expect such a light. Then, you could anticipate the light and get in position ahead of time to take advantage of it. Actually, there is a time when such light occurs -- this time is known as the “magic hour”. Best of all, baring weather issues, it happens twice a day.

Two Magic Hours

Photographers often talk about the magic hour. However, there are actually two magic hours, and each of the magic hours has its own type of light. This article will cover both magic hours.

Magic Hour #1

Magic hour #1 is really two, approximately, half hour periods. The first period is the half hour after the sun rises above the horizon in the morning. The second period is the half hour before the sun sinks below the horizon in the late afternoon. During these periods, the light that is generally produced is a beautiful light that is a favorite of landscape and nature photographers. Let us take a look at this light and why it is so often sought out by photographers.

As covered above, from a photographic point of view, light can be characterized by its color, quality, and direction. Thus, the magic hour #1 light can be evaluated from this perspective. In short, the magic hour light is as follows:

- Color: The light is warm and has a lower content of white light mixed in than during the day. This results in objects with warm, saturated colors.

- Quality: The light is soft and produces pleasant shadows and gentle tonal transitions.

- Direction: The light is directional (often used as side or backlighting) which emphasizes texture and shape.

Thus, magic hour #1 light creates colorful, saturated images with gentle tonal transitions and detailed textures or shapes -- just what most photographers want in their nature or landscape images.

“Photographers often talk about the magic hour. However, there are actually two magic hours, and each of the magic hours has its own type of light”

“Magic hour #1 is really two, approximately, half hour periods. The first period is the half hour after the sun rises above the horizon in the morning. The second period is the half hour before the sun sinks below the horizon in the late afternoon”

Figure 14: Magic Hour #1

Figure 14 shows an image that uses the magic hour #1 light to enhance the scene. As can be seen in the image, the natural red color of the rock has been enhanced on the spires by the warm light. In addition, the soft quality of the light has created gentle shadows that hold detail. This can especially be seen on the base of the rock, which has fallen into shadow.
One might wonder why magic hour #1 light has these qualities that make it special? The answer resides in the low angle of the sun to the horizon and in the atmosphere.

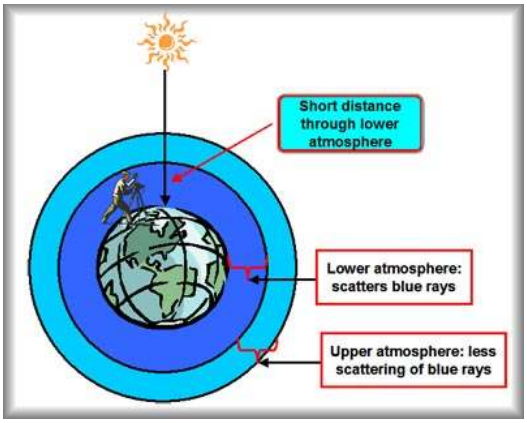

Figure 15: Midday Atmospheric Conditions

A comparison of midday light to magic hour #1 light will help clarify the issue. Figure 15 shows the relative position of the sun and earth during midday. For illustrative purposes, the atmosphere has been divided into two parts: the upper and lower atmospheres. The upper atmosphere has fewer air molecules than in the lower atmosphere. This is why people who live at lower elevations tire easily and get altitude sickness at higher elevations. It is also the reason that military pilots wear oxygen masks when flying at very high elevations.
The lower altitude has a much denser air with more air molecules. The air molecules in the lower atmosphere are key to understanding the difference between midday light and magic hour #1 light. These lower atmosphere air molecules scatter the cool, blue rays in light much more than they scatter the warmer rays. The air molecules in the upper atmosphere also scatter blue rays, but there are far fewer air molecules at those higher elevations, so much less scattering occurs.
As seen in Figure 15, during the midday, the sun takes a fairly short, direct route through the atmosphere. This shortens the amount of distance that the light must travel through the lower atmosphere.

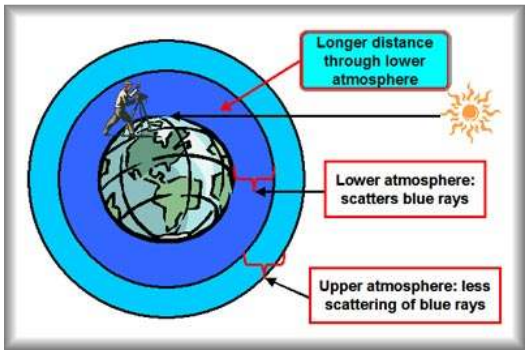

Figure 16: Magic Hour #1 Atmospheric Conditions

Figure 16 shows the relative position of the sun and earth during magic hour #1. As can be seen, at this time, the sun is low to the horizon. This causes the light to travel a longer distance through the lower atmosphere than at midday. Since the light must travel a longer distance through the lower atmosphere, it encounters more air molecules. These air molecules increase the amount of scattering of the blue light. Once the blue light has been scattered out of the light, the light that remains has a higher percentage of the warmer colors (i.e., red, orange, and yellow). Thus, the light becomes warm. This is important because the human brain is more sensitive to these warm colors than other colors (that is why stop lights are red rather than a nice pale blue).

This extra travel through the lower atmosphere also explains the quality of magic hour #1 light. Those lower atmosphere air molecules serve to diffuse the light. This creates a softer light than that at midday.
The only aspect of magic hour #1 light that cannot be attributed to the lower atmosphere is the directional nature of the light. Instead, this is due to the low angle of the sun with respect to the horizon. Since the sun is low on the horizon, it tends to glance across the surface of the earth. This low angle light creates shadows that tend to emphasize texture and shapes.

Magic Hour #2

The first magic hour is fairly well known in photography. What I call magic hour #2 is probably not as well recognized by photographers. Magic Hour #2 is also composed of two, approximately, half hour periods. The first period is the half hour before the sun rises above the horizon in the morning. The second period is the half hour after the sun sinks below the horizon in the early evening. Typically, the most intense colors occur about twenty minutes before sunrise or after sunset. Depending on atmospheric conditions, magic hour #2 can produce two different types of lighting conditions. The first type of light is as follows:

- Color: The light is very warm and produces very saturated colors.
- Quality: The light is soft.
- Direction: The light directly illuminates

"What I call magic hour #2 is probably not as well recognized by photographers. Magic Hour #2 is also composed of two, approximately, half hour periods. The first period is the half hour before the sun rises above the horizon in the morning. The second period is the half hour after the sun sinks below the horizon in the early evening"

clouds from below. Everything else is in shadow.

The difference between this light and magic hour #1 light is that this light only illuminates clouds since the sun has dropped below the horizon. Everything else is in shadow. Furthermore, this light is a super saturated, super warm light. In short, this light is great for incredibly intense sunrise or sunset shots.

Figure 17: Magic Hour #2

Figure 17 shows an image that was shot after the sun dropped below the horizon in magic hour #2 light. The image clearly shows the super saturated nature of this type of light. It also shows that everything but the clouds is in shadow.

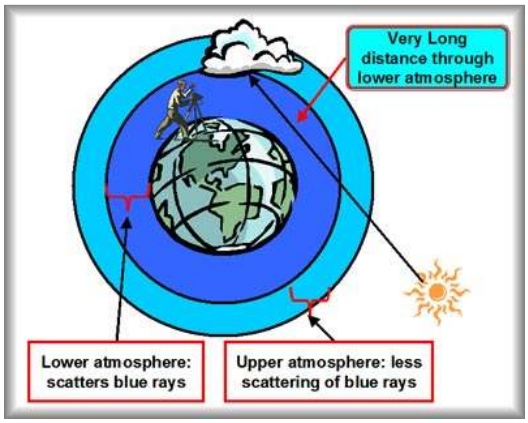

Figure 18: Magic Hour #2 Atmospheric Conditions (Clouds)

Figure 18 illustrates how this type of light is produced during magic hour #2. The key is, again, the lower atmosphere. The sun has now dropped below the horizon (the distance that the sun has dropped below the horizon is exaggerated in Figures 18 and 20 for illustrative purposes). As a consequence, the light is again traveling a long distance through the lower atmosphere, even a longer distance than during the first magic hour. This scatters even more of the blue light, creating an even warmer, saturated light. This light strikes the clouds from underneath. The white clouds serve as the perfect surface to display the deeply saturated colors of the light. Everything else will be in shadow.

Of course, this only happens under the right conditions. If the cloud cover is too heavy, it blocks the sunlight and no color appears.

If the sky has the right amount of haze, the second type of magic hour #2 light may occur. In this case the light is as follows:

- Color: Depending on conditions, the light can be either cool or warm.
- Quality: The light is soft.
- Direction: The light is being bounced off the sky, so the light is not directional.

In this case, the light illuminates the sky with either a cool or warm light. This light then illuminates the earth with a soft, dim light.

Figure 19: Magic Hour #2

Figure 19 shows an image shot in this type of magic hour #2 light. In this case, the atmosphere created two hues of light that saturated the sky with color. The image also shows that the rest of the scene is dimly lit by the sky. In this type of magic hour #2 light, the atmosphere generally is the major point of interest with the rest of the image playing a supporting role.

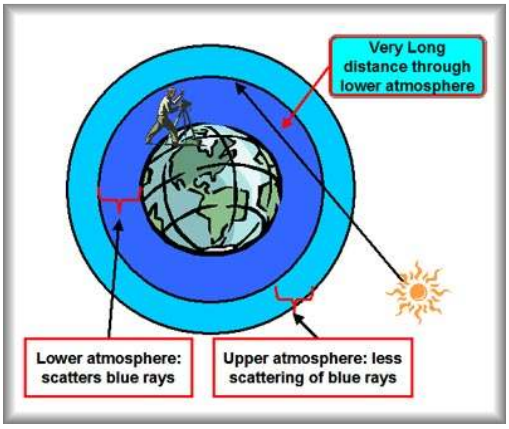

Figure 20: Magic Hour #2 Atmospheric Conditions (No Clouds)

Figure 20 illustrates how this type of magic hour #2 light is created. The light hits the sky from below. However, here things become a bit tricky. The light is traveling a long distance through the lower atmosphere. That warms the light. However, the scene is also being illuminated from the sky, which has all of that scattered blue light. Therefore, you can get either cool or warm light. I have photographed both light conditions. Frankly, I do not know how to predict which will occur. Sometimes, neither happens.

Conclusion: It's Up to You

The magic is simple: rise early and stay late. You might be tired, but you'll have some great images.

Article and Photography copyright:
Ron Bigelow

How to Succeed with the Light:

It is simply a matter of planning. Once you have a location selected, you:

- Determine which magic hour light you wish to use.
- Visualize how that light will interact with the environment.
- Plan how to set up your image to optimize the use of the light to create the emotional impact that you desire.
- Head to your destination with enough time to get in place and set up before the light happens.

One word of caution. There are no guarantees with the "magic hour" Sometimes it happens and sometimes it doesn't. I once had an image in mind that I wanted to shoot. It involved a rock in the ocean that I wanted to photograph with a dramatic sunset behind it. In order to get that shot, I had to go out onto another rock that stuck out into the ocean, set up my tripod, and wait for the magic hour light as the waves crashed around me. The first five times that I went, the magic hour light failed to materialize due to heavy cloud cover. On the sixth outing, I got my shot.

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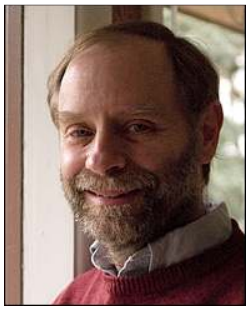


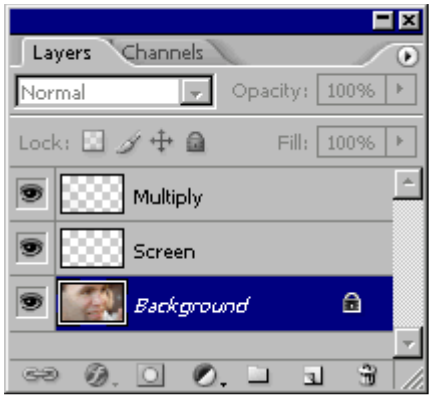
PHOTOSHOPOGRAPHY: Paint With Light

Thomas Niemann has always had a strong fascination with photography. At eight years old he was photographing worms. The bug really bit when his parents purchased a darkroom kit. Later he worked on the high school paper and yearbook. This was followed by an all too brief summer at the Winona School of Professional Photography. Somehow, and he's not quite sure how, he ended up teaching computer science at Portland Community College in Portland, Oregon. The result of this mix, photography and computer science, produced PTLens — software for correcting lens distortion.

For many years darkroom technicians have modified images, improving tonality, by Painting With Light (PWL). Placing their hands, or other objects, between the enlarger and light-sensitive paper they were able to selectively change tonal values. You can simulate this effect, using blends, in Photoshop. This article explores the characteristics and relationships of several blends and their application to PWL.

Multiply/Screen Blends

For this effect we'll create two new transparent layers above the image. Create a transparent layer with a Screen blend, and another transparent layer with a Multiply blend. Paint on the Screen layer with a white brush to lighten (dodge) the image. Paint on the Multiply layer with a black brush to darken (burn) the image.



Choose a reduced opacity brush, in Normal mode, with an opacity of 10-20%. Press "D" for default colors (black & white) and "X" to swap colors. Control brush size with the "[" and "]" keys. Control brush hardness with the Shift-[and Shift-] keys.

Hard Light Blend

The Multiply/Screen technique requires two layers. We can accomplish a similar effect in one layer using a Hard Light blend. Create a transparent layer above the image and specify a Hard Light blend. You can fill it with neutral gray (128,128,128) if you wish, but I find transparent more convenient. It's easier to erase to transparency than it is to select (128,128,128) and paint.

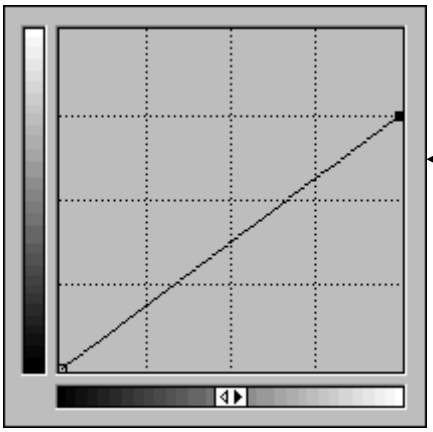
Use a reduced opacity brush to dodge and burn. Paint with white to lighten and black to darken. The close-up shot, below, is followed by a Hard Light PWL effect.

NUGGETS:

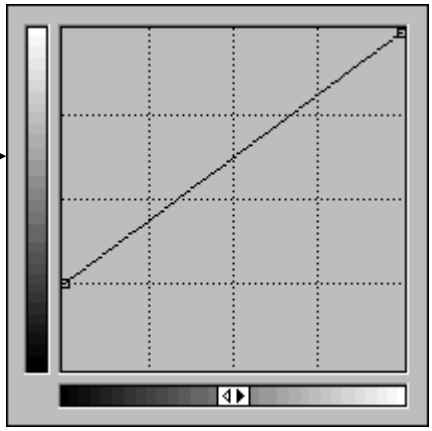
"For many years darkroom technicians have modified images, improving tonality, by Painting With Light (PWL). You can simulate this effect, using blends, in Photoshop."

"The Overlay blend is a popular device for dodging and burning that gives pleasing results. Unlike linear methods, such as Multiply and Screen, highlights and shadows are not lost. For special effects, however, a stronger blend is required."

An attempt to emphasize the five o'clock shadow resulted in an area that lacks contrast and has a painted look. That's because Hard Light, and its cousins Multiply and Screen, are linear blends.

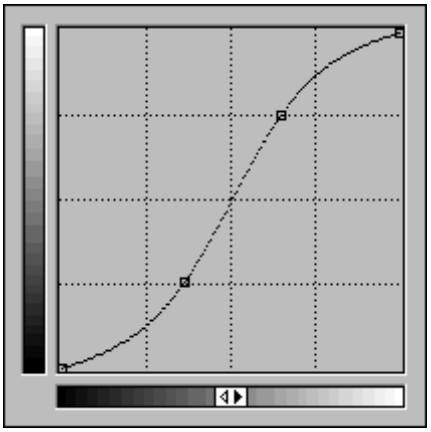


Multiply



Screen

With Multiply and Screen blends bright values are shifted down and dark values are shifted up. The net result is a loss of contrast and a rather wimpy-looking image.



A nonlinear adjustment, as indicated above, will darken shadows and brighten highlights while retaining dynamic range. The S-shaped curve has an increase in slope for midrange values gives the impression of increased contrast. For our image we'll strive for more realistic results with a nonlinear blend in the next section.

Overlay Blend

The Overlay blend is a nonlinear blend that increases contrast. Create a single transparent layer above the image and specify an Overlay blend. Use a reduced opacity brush to dodge and burn. Paint with white to lighten and black to darken. Adjust the Opacity slider in the Layers palette to control the amount of the effect. Recall that an

S-shaped curve increases contrast. The steeper the slope, the higher the contrast. It would be nice if we had a slider that would change the slope of the curve. In fact this is easy to do. Create an Adjustment layer with Mode set to Overlay. It doesn't matter what type of Adjustment layer you choose — for our purposes they all behave the same. Then adjust the Opacity slider to control contrast.

The Overlay blend is a popular device for dodging and burning that gives pleasing results. Unlike linear methods, such as Multiply and Screen, highlights and shadows are not lost. For special effects, however, a stronger blend is required.

"…Hard Light, and its cousins Multiply and Screen, are linear blends. With Multiply and Screen blends bright values are shifted down and dark values are shifted up. The net result is a loss of contrast and a rather wimpy-looking image."

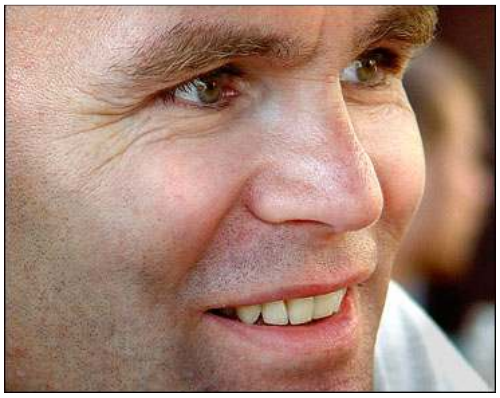
"S-shaped curve increases contrast. The steeper the slope, the higher the contrast"

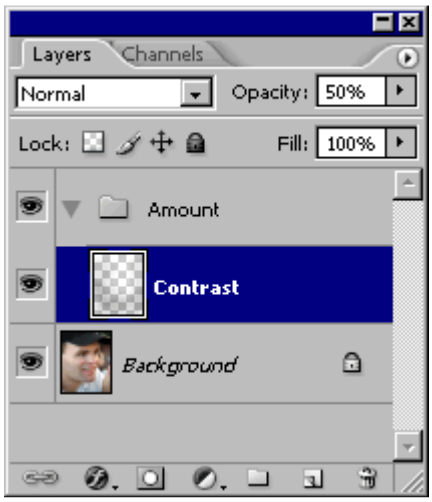
Stronger Blends

You can achieve stronger and more dramatic effects with the Color Dodge and Color Burn blends. It's best to create the layers using the Layers menu because they must be initialized with solid black or white. Create layers, above the image, as follows:

- Choose Layer > New > Layer. Specify Color Dodge for Mode and fill with black.
- Choose Layer > New > Layer. Specify Color Burn for Mode and fill with white.

Use a reduced opacity brush to dodge and burn. Paint with white on a Color Dodge layer to lighten the image. Paint with black on a Color Burn layer to darken the image. Let's apply this technique to our image. The net result is a striking and gritty image that simulates harsh lighting conditions.





Use a reduced opacity brush to dodge and burn. Paint with white to lighten and black to darken. Adjust opacity of the Amount group to control amount, and adjust opacity of the Contrast layer to control contrast. If you get carried away and overdo the effect then, as a last step, reduce the amount (Opacity slider) for more reasonable results.

This technique also works well for black and white. The original image was converted to black and white, then modified with a Hard Mix blend.

Single-Layer Strong Blends

If you prefer to work on a single layer, rather than two Color Dodge/Color Burn layers, use a Vivid Light or Hard Mix blend. Hard Mix, introduced in Photoshop CS, is the strongest of the two. Both blends have the same effect on shadows, but Hard Mix produces slightly brighter highlights.

We'll wrap the blends in a group or set. The result will be a nonlinear blend that increases contrast and closely resembles Color Dodge/Burn. As an added bonus we'll have control over both the amount and contrast of the effect. Create the following layers:

- A group, or set, called "Amount", with a Vivid Light or Hard Mix blend at 100% opacity.
- A transparent layer, within the group, called "Contrast" with a Normal blend at 50% opacity.

Downloads

A Paint With Light action that utilizes Color Dodge and Color Burn blends can be downloaded from Actions Central (http://www.atncentral.com). Created by Chip Springer, this action is widely used and has fostered considerable interest in PWL. Chip goes by the name of cspringer in the Retouching forum at dpreview.com.

An action that uses Vivid Light/Hard Mix blends is available at epaperpress.com/psphoto. Choose Dodging & Burning > Paint With Light for details. The color image was converted to black and white using the Black & White action (choose Black & White > Black & White) at the same site.

Please email your comments and suggestions to magazine@pbase.com

GEAR-TALK: Underwater Photography

Scubalex is a South Florida native and resident. He learned to dive in St. Maarten while cruising the Caribbean on vacation. Since then, he has dived and photographed many locations throughout the Caribbean including various famous reefs and wrecks. Scubalex began underwater photography (and photography in general) in mid 2004, and has pursued it since. He currently shoots a Canon 20D in Ikelite housing, with two Ikelite DS-125 strobes. Scubalex enjoys great dive conversation as well as relaxing and vacationing with his lovely wife and son.

I discovered a love for underwater photography the moment I laid eyes on the first pictures I took, when completing a "*Discover Scuba*" class on the island of St. Maarten.

I was fascinated with the concept of breathing underwater. The joy I felt and the beauty of nature's majesty was revealed to me in my pictures.

So I began my journey to learn about scuba diving and underwater photography. Getting started meant understanding everything about diving, after all, staying safe at any given depth is the most important factor. Nevertheless, every time I dove I always purchased a disposable underwater camera. The anticipation of developing those pictures was always great, seeing them was even better. So after completing my advanced open water certification, it was time to shed the disposable camera.

Speigel Grove Flag (The Speigel Grove is a 510ft Navy Vessel)

Underwater photography was my next goal, getting there meant spending quite a few dollars. I initially purchased a ReefMaster DC310 Digital Pro Set. This camera was considered the most practical point and shoot set up at the time. I owned the Canon Rebel 35mm, but digital seemed the best choice given its growing popularity. Pictures from the DC310 were nice indeed. I was very impressed with the strobe the set came with, it truly provided ample light to bring out all the color you lose at depth. Reviewing these images amazed me. I enjoyed everything about them except one thing, I could never get them printed larger than 8x10.
The DC 310 was a 3.3 megapixel camera, so this became my new limitation.

The Sealife Reefmaster DC 310 Camera. It comes with the housing, rated for maximum depth of 200 feet. Nice entry level setup.

The Sealife Reefmaster DC 310 Camera with optional strobe

At that moment I decided it was time to go deep into my pockets. An SLR investment meant spending a large amount of cash and

AQUA GALLERY:

World Famous Christ of the Abyss, located in Key Largo, Florida

This Christ statue was donated to the U.S. by a French scuba diving equipment manufacturer named Cressi.
It was placed off the shores of Key Largo. It is considered to be the most visited dive and snorkel site in the world.

Taking pictures at the Spiegel Grove

This is my 20D underwater setup for now. I'm still adding a second strobe soon. This picture was taken by another diver at 120 ft. depth.

getting it to go deep underwater, even more.

The Quest for the right Camera

I always liked my Canon Rebel; So Canon seemed like a good choice for me. I went to my local camera store and I was told Canon was getting ready to release their newest Camera, the 20D in one week. I explained to the person at the counter my plans were to use it underwater and he thought I was crazy.

Before buying the camera, I needed to find a housing for it. Ikelite was the only company offering a housing for the 20D. And so the purchases were made, ouch I sure felt that in the pocket.

As many people guessed, the Canon 20D turned out to be an extraordinary camera. My experience both with the camera and the housing has been positive. I added a DS125 strobe , also made by Ikelite. This strobe is

Canon 20D inside an Ikelite brand housing. This housing allows the 20D to be submerged up to 200 feet.

This is the Ikelite brand DS 125 Strobe

- *Full power recycle time of 1 second*
- *TTL, Full, 1/2, 1/4, 1/8 powers*
- *Fuel Gauge*
- *Modeling Light*
- *90 degree angle of coverage*
- *Diffuser to cover 100 degrees*

compatible with the TTL and can increase or decrease the amount of light it provides.

Current Inventory and Wish-List

At the present time my lens inventory is made up of a Canon 18-55mm kit lens. I just purchased a Canon EF-S 10-22mm f/3.5-4.5 USM. This lens will provide beautiful wide angle shots, exposing a broader view of the reefs. I plan on using it extensively in January 2006, on a trip to Cozumel Mexico. In the future, I would like to purchase a Canon EF 100mm f/2.8 Macro USM. This lens will allow me to shoot the sometimes comical critters, such as shrimp and

small blennies, found on coral and the ocean floor.

Diving Safety

While diving is a sport in which one must be aware of his or her surroundings, it is not as dangerous as most might think. As an underwater photographer the first question most people ask is, *"What do you do when you see a shark?"*

The fact is I haven't seen many; they do not rush out and attack when you jump in the water. Sharks are more timid than people imagine. Most sharks do not want anything to do with you, in fact most swim away and find another part of the reef to patrol. Two divers exhausting bubbles in the water, thankfully, are not a delicatessen to most sharks. The majority of diving injuries occur when folks simply do not pay attention to their depth and air consumption. Like in everything we do, training makes all the difference. The deeper a diver goes, the less time he or she has to be underwater. It is important to monitor your gauges or dive computer, in order to complete a dive safely. These are all things covered in your dive certification class.

Making it a Career

For anyone interested in underwater photography, keep in mind several things:
Scuba diving is serious business. Learning to watch your air consumption, your depth and controlling your buoyancy, are all things you need to master before taking pictures underwater. PADI

World Famous, Key Largo minnow cave. Millions of minnows congregate here every winter. This cave is neat to swim through as the minnows surround you.

This baby Jack gets leftover morsels and some protection from predators by closely following the stingray

Shot of Tiffany, my wife and model cruising over a reef.

is a great agency to get certified through, although there are a few others. They also offer underwater photography as a specialty course. Never underestimate the power of our oceans - good training is priceless.

Next decide on which type of camera you wish to take underwater, nowadays you can find that just about all point and shoots have a housing that is manufactured for them. If you like the convenience of a small camera that does not take long to set up in your pre-dive, this is a good way to go. Some newer housings even incorporate a sandblasted area over the flash. This feature serves as a diffuser, giving your flash more area of coverage.

A small setup like this is also great for pool shots snorkeling and shallow reef dives, If you have an SLR or wish to get a new one, there are several companies that make great housings for your camera. Try Ikelite, Gates, or Aquatica - all good companies that provide great technical support and advice for your needs. Understandably this is the most professional way to go. Housings for SLR cameras are likely just as expensive as the camera itself. Proper care must be taken in your pre-dive to make sure your housing is airtight before entering the water. You will also want to insure your equipment, although most insurance companies do not insure these items for use underwater. Divers Alert Network, known as DAN will offer equipment replacement coverage. The constant threat of a housing possibly flooding underwater means it is wise to investigate obtaining some type of coverage.

Underwater photography is hard work. Dealing with seasickness, bad weather, strong currents and moving subjects while trying to set up a great shot, takes practice.
Yet through it all, I believe it is very rewarding. The beauty of our ocean reefs is impressive indeed. Getting underwater and bringing back great images for others to see, at least for me, is something one must truly experience to understand. If anybody needs some tips on gear, training, or you just have some questions about underwater photography. Please visit my galleries and leave a message. I will try to help the best I can.

Angel and Buds

Please email your comments and suggestions to magazine@pbase.com

CULTURE CAULDRON: India

Culture Cauldron is a new section where we hope to feature the vivid and beautiful cultures of various countries and communities around the world. In this issue, we feature the work of Jyothi Karthik Raja, a popular PBase photographer who presents his viewpoint of India. Due to space limitations, we could only feature a trimmed down version of his larger 'culture cauldron'. Interested readers are invited to visit his work at http://www.pbase.com/yardbird/pad_dec_2004. We also present a sidebar write-up on the 'Pushkar' fair of Rajasthan by Ashok Vishwanathan. If you would like us to feature the culture of your country or a place you love, why don't you author a 'culture cauldron' and email the article to us ?

India, a country with over one billion people spread over 3.3 million square kilometers of land is so culturally diverse that it would be difficult to capture it in any amount of words or photos. India's history stretches from the earliest civilizations, through hundreds of kings and wars, through religions and festivals, through movies and modernization. This gallery is an attempt to capture an

essence, a flavor, a taste of this wonderful land.

A – Anjali: is Sanskrit for 'joining hands'. This sacred hand position, called anjali mudra (AHN-jah-lee MOO-dra), is found throughout Asia and has become synonymous with images of the East. In the West, this gesture is a posture of prayer. If you are visiting India, it is customary to greet everyone with this gesture and the word "Namaste." Saying Namaste properly always makes a great first impression.

B – Bharatanatyam: is a classical Indian dance. Bharatanatyam is thought to have been created by the Bharata Muni, a Hindu sage, who wrote the "Natya Shastra", the most important scripture of classical Indian dance. Each performance usually tells a story. Bharatanatyam has two aspects, "lasya", the graceful feminine lines and movements, and "tandava", the masculine aspect. The dance form consists of three basic elements, "Nritta" or rhythm, "Nritya" or rhythm with expression and "Natya" which is dramatic element. The story, scene, costume, jewels, they are all a very important part of the dance. The pose the dancer is depicting here is 'dreamy'. It is usually used to show longing for a loved one. The dancer

wears a "sari" made from silk during a performance or cotton during practice. Check with the local Indian Chapter for schedules of shows in your community. It will be an evening well spent.

F - 'Filmi': is the Indian *slang* for over dramatization. India is the world's largest producer of films. Every year almost a thousand movies are churned out and to the billion Indians this is the best source of entertainment. The stars are bigger than life, the stories are grander than fiction and the industry serves as the livelihood for millions. 'Bollywood', 'Kollywood', 'Tollywood', these are just some of the film industries in India. Watch "Nayakan" – an Indian remake of Godfather and "Dil Chahta hai" – a modern day story of three friends if you want to see well made movies or else just pick up any Bollywood movie to see the kitsch of Indian cinema.

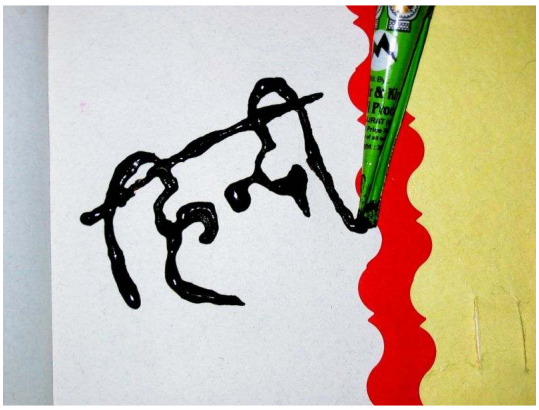
PUSHKAR

A LEGEND ON THE EDGE OF THE DESERT :RAJASTHAN:

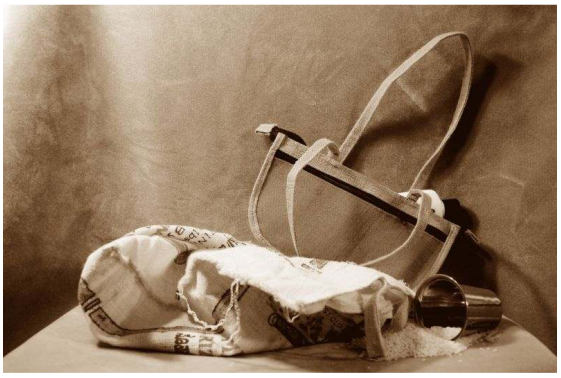
- Ashok Vishwanathan

Pushkar is a name that is familiar to global travelers for the annual Pushkar Camel fair. To Indians, Pushkar is a sacred sleepy lakeside

settlement 11kms from Ajmer and 138 km from Jaipur, best approached by a car drive from Jaipur. During the fair, hotel accommodation is scarce due to the huge number of Indian and foreign visitors. Hotel rates also tend to skyrocket during the week of the Pushkar fair with costs from US $50 to $200 per day. Accommodation is clean but basic. Specially arranged luxury tents with running water and private showers are available close to the fair ground and offer a more authentic experience of the Pushkar fair. It is essential to book early in order to be assured accommodation.



H – Hindi: is considered to be the national language of India. This has caused quite a stir, as there are more than 20 official languages, more than 400 languages and over a thousand dialects. Hindi, however is spoken by most people. Over 200 million people speak Hindi as their mother tongue. In this picture, Hindi is being written with Henna. **Henna** also known as Mehendi, is a plant, whose dye is used in art forms in India. During weddings, it is customary for all the women to have their hands and feet painted with henna. It is also used to dye hair. Henna is a coolant, thus is very prominent in the desert areas.



J – Jute: is a long, soft, shiny fiber that can be spun into coarse, strong threads. It is one of the cheapest natural fibers, and is second only to cotton in its diverse uses. Jute, one of the oldest surviving agro-industries in India, has been traditionally in use for flexible packaging, especially sacks. Nowadays, the fibers are also woven into curtains, chair coverings, carpets, and trendy handbags. India is the largest producer of Jute. It also is the leading producer of mangoes, cashews, peanuts, pulses, sesame seeds, tea, and many spices like cardamom, ginger and turmeric. It is also a leading producer of cauliflowers, onions, rice, sugar cane, apples, bananas, coconuts, coffee, cotton, eggplants, oranges, potatoes, rubber, tobacco, and wheat. India has the world's highest percentage of arable land to the total geographical area, in the world. Agriculture accounts for about 10% of India's exports and still serves as the livelihood for millions of Indians. When you visit India make sure your itinerary contains a trip to the villages.

K - 'KumKum' is the red powder Indian women place on their foreheads. Kumkum is a symbol of marriage. During the wedding the groom places kumkum on the bride's forehead and at the center of the junction of the hair and forehead. He also ties with three knots a 'Thali', a yellow thread, around her neck. The three knots signify the acceptance of the woman as the man's wife, the joining of the two families and an announcement of the marriage to the public. Though traditionally the Kumkum is used to adorn the forehead, nowadays the 'Bindi' a modern substitute is available in different colors, shapes and designs and as stick-ons. It adds a lot of beauty to the Indian woman. For thousands of years in India, **'Kajal'** or black eyeliner has been used to highlight the lower eyelid. It is a mixture of black carbon deposits with wax, medicated ghee, coconut oil, camphor, etc. Mothers usually put Kajal for boys and girls as a symbol to protect the eye from evil. They also use it to make a black dot on the cheeks of the child to add a slight imperfection to their otherwise most beautiful child. This is called 'Drishti' and is again used to protect the child from evil and the jealous curses of others.

PUSHKAR

CONTINUED

The Indian poet, Kalidas, mentions it in his classic, Abhigyan Sakuntalam. The Hindu epics of Mahabharat and Ramayana make references to this religious place.

Legend has it that Pushkar lake sprung into existence when God Bhrama struck the demon Vajra Nabha with his weapon, a lotus flower and one of the petals fell at Pushkar. Bhrama is supposed to have performed a sacrifice at this lake and today a temple (the only one of its kind) is dedicated to him. Thousands of hindus visit Pushkar for a dip in the lake and worship at this temple during the four day period of Kartik Purnima which coincides with the desert camel fair.

Each year the five day fair attracts a staggering number of camels, horses, cattle and sheep that travel from all over the golden sands of Rajastan. Accompanying them are turbaned cattle traders, women in brightly coloured dresses and whole families who attend this annual event where they inhabit the barren plain with the desert and the camels as a backdrop. This mixed crowd and the tourists they attract turn the desert landscape into a riot of colour, smells and action.

U - Upanayanam or the “Thread ceremony” is one of the most important times in a Brahmin's lifetime. It is performed to mark the beginning of studenthood for a Brahmin. It also deems the bachelor as eligible to study the Vedas. It is believed in Hinduism that the life passes through four stages or ‘ashramas’.

- *brahmacharin*, or celibate student
- *grihastha/grihini*, or householder
- *vanaprastha*, or stage of retirement from society
- *sannyasin*, or renunciant who breaks all social ties
-

It is to mark the entry to the first stage that the Upanayanam is celebrated. During the ceremony the boy is given the sacred thread comprising of three strands. These are worn by the boy throughout his life. It is worn like a sash across the left shoulder to the right hip. Before the boy is given the sacred thread, the boy is taught the “Gayatri Mantra” a powerful prayer, which he repeats 1001 times, every day. Nowadays given the pressures of practical life these customs are only followed in very conservative families.

Lighting the lamps: This is a very ancient tradition in India. For generations lamps have been lit in the house. The types of lamps vary from household to household and in the olden days the grander the lamps the grander the status of the house. The flame in the lamp is equated to the lighting of the soul. The lamp that is being lit is called the 'Kuthu Villake' and has five corners, each representing the five elements. This is one of the most common lamps and you will find it in most houses. The lamp to the left is the 'Paavai Villake' or the lady lamp. It is a beautifully carved lamp with a very ornate base. The lamps are lit with a thread or “Thiri” soaked in oil.

'Kolam' or 'Rangoli': is a decorative design that is put in all Indian houses. You will usually see them before entering any Indian home. Traditionally the “kolams” are put not only at the entrances to houses but also on the table underneath your plate while eating, near the idols and on kitchen counters. Kolams are made from rice powder, thus it

was believed that ants will come and feed off the rice powder and thus will not eat your food or enter your house. This was the original reason for kolams. Over the years the practice has developed into an art form with people using it to exhibit their creative side. Rangoli competitions are a common sight in school exhibitions and it requires a lot of skill to make one.

Daily Sheet Calendar - This is a very essential calendar for many Indians. On the left is the day, date and month according to the Julian Calendar. On the right is the day, month and year according to the Tamil (Southern Indian Language) custom. Jan 1st 2004 is equivalent to 17th of 'Margazhi' (month name) of the 'Tharana' (year name). In the Tamil calendar the date, month and year differs from the Julian calendar.
At the bottom is more important information about the day. On the first line in yellow is the Star that is ruling on that day. Each day there is a different star and this cycle repeats after 28 days. In the Indian system, the star that is ruling on your birthday is very important and has a very strong influence on your life.
On the third line it simply tells you any important occasion on that day. In this sheet it says it is a new year and that it is a government holiday.
On the fourth line, in pink are the times of influence of the 'Ragu' star. It is customary not to hold any auspicious events during this time.
In the last line is the good or lucky timings for the day and the important events are held at those times.
Thus each daily sheet gives very important information about the day and helps Indians plan the day's activities.

PUSHKAR

CONTINUED

It’s a land where one’s status and wealth is measured in camels. Camels, horses and sheep are bought and sold and negotiation is a serious process with the turbaned men folk describing the virtues of their particular camel to prospective buyers.

The brightly dressed women spend their time in the stalls selling, bangles, silverware, nose rings, neck bands, anklets, toe rings and the now rare and hard to find ivory bangles.

Fashion extends to the camels as well who are decked out in mirrored patchwork, colorful beads and saddle straps. The camel is bathed and even perfumed. Let it not be said that a Rajastani man does not love his camel.

On the closing day, the bathing ghats attract the Hindus and early risers manage to get the best spots for the ritual bath in the holy lake to wash away the sins of a lifetime. Long colourfull ques wind up to the temple with devotees waiting for the lords blessings.

If you haven’t been to Pushkar, it’s a photography opportunity worth attending.

STYLE GURU : Of SlideShows and Gallery Searches

In this issue we show you how to set up your own PBase slideshow as well as implement a gallery specific search. All these tips are available at the PBase Wiki, which Srijith maintains.

HOWTO #1: How to create a slideshow

Credits: Srijith, Yardbird, Arjun

There are two ways to add a slideshow to your gallery. The first provides an inline slideshow that is visible to the user as soon as they enter the gallery and the other method requires them to click (a link or an image) to launch the slidshow.

Inline method

This method directly displays the slideshow using space above your galleries. If you don't like this extra space usage and prefer a link to a slideshow, please see the "Extra click method"

For this method, use the code below as the starting point. Copy-paste it into your gallery's description field and enable 'html flag'.

```
<center>
<iframe frameborder="0px"
style="border:0px" width="460"
height="450"
src="http://www.srijith.net/pbase
/slideshow.cgi?user=USER&gallery=
GALLERY_NAME()&delay=DELAY&color=
COLORCODE&title=TITLE&size=SIZE&m
axwidth=MAXWIDTH&maxheight=MAXHEI
GHT">
<!-- Alternate content for non-
supporting browsers -->
<h2>Your browser does not support
the technology needed for this
slideshow.</h2>
</iframe>
</center>
```

Then make the following changes to suit your needs:

- Change USER to your username
- Change DELAY to the number of seconds delay you would like between slides (minimum is 3 seconds)
- Change COLORCODE to the Hexadecimal color code that is used for your gallery backrgound (example ffffff for white, 000000 for black)
- Change TITLE to 1 if all your gallery images have titles or 0 if they do not. 0 is assumed if not set explicitly
- Change SIZE to 'medium', 'large' or 'auto'. If you choose 'large' make sure that all images in the gallery do indeed have a large sized image. Choose 'auto' if you have panoramic image in your gallery. If nothing is specified, 'medium' is assumed.
- Change MAXWIDTH and MAXHEIGHT to the the maximum value of the width and height of the images in your gallery at the SIZE you selected. If not specified they are assumed to be 400 and 300 (if SIZE is medium) or 800 and 600 (if SIZE is large or auto).If you see scrollbars when you view the gallery, change the values 460 and 450 to larger values.

Extra-click method

For this method, use the code below as the starting point. Copy-paste it into your gallery's description field and enable 'html flag'

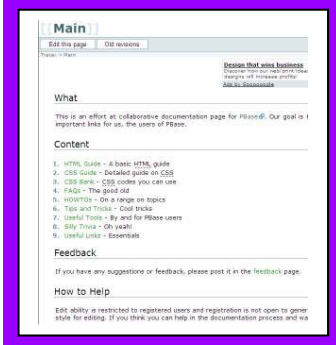
```
<center><a
href='javascript:doslide()'><img
src="http://www.srijith.net/pbase
/ss-img/ss.jpg" /></a></center>
<script language="JavaScript1.2">
function doslide()
{

document.write('<html><head></hea
d><body bgcolor=#COLOR>')
   document.write('<center>')
   document.write('<iframe
frameborder="0px"
style="border:0px"     width="500"
height="500"
src="http://www.srijith.net/pbase
/slideshow.cgi?user=USER&gallery=
GALLERY_NAME()&delay=DELAY&color=
COLOR&title=TITLE&size=SIZE&maxwi
dth=MAXWIDTH&maxheight=MAXHEIGHT"
>');
   document.write('<h2>Your
browser  does  not  support  the
technology  needed  for  this
slideshow.</h2>')
   document.write('</iframe>
</center></body></html>')
}
</script>
```

Then make the following changes to suit your needs:

- Change USER to your username
- Change DELAY to the number of seconds delay you would like between slides (minimum is 3 seconds)
- Change COLORCODE to the Hexadecimal color code that is used for your gallery backrgound (example ffffff for white, 000000 for black)
- Change TITLE to 1 if all your gallery images have titles or 0 if they do not. 0 is assumed if not set explicitly

PBase Wiki:



A new *un-official* Wiki has been created with a host of tips, tricks and How-To's that is meant to help PBase users with their gallery customization as well as how to use PBase more effectively. (By un-official we mean this was not created by the PBase owners – instead, this is the work of a bunch of PBase users who thought this may be a useful knowledgebase. Take a look here !

- Change SIZE to 'medium', 'large' or 'auto'. If you choose 'large' make sure that all images in the gallery do indeed have a large sized image. Choose 'auto' if you have panoramic image in your gallery. If nothing is specified, 'medium' is assumed.
- Change MAXWIDTH and MAXHEIGHT to the the maximum value of the width and height of the images in your gallery at the SIZE you selected. If not specified they are assumed to be 400 and 300 (if SIZE is medium) or 800 and 600 (if SIZE is large or auto).If you see scrollbars when you view the gallery, change the values 500 to larger values.

Which method to use?

The inline method involves one less click. However it will use up some space for the slideshow even if the viewer is not interested in the slideshow. The other method does involve one more click but it does not impose the slideshow area onto viewers.

Caveat

Please see here for caveats to the slideshow.

HOWTO #2: How to add a gallery specific search

Credits: Ftuma, Arjun

Adding a search to your PBase site is a very useful feature. People can search for images within your gallery with ease. One way to do it is to use the Google "site:" operator, for example, executing a search in Google as "nightscape site:www.pbase.com/arjunrc" . The problem with this approach is that Google "site:" does no work well since /arjunrc is a subdirectory and not a sub domain - Google "site:" does not filter directories.

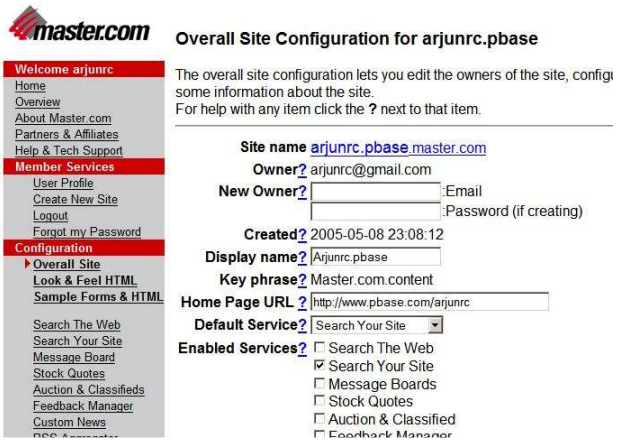
Welcome to a free cool tool from master.com site search.

I have successfully managed to integrate it into my site for a long time and it works like a charm. Please feel free to give it a test run here - look for the search box in the grey rectangle to the left.

While I have used it to index my entire PBase site, Robert has adapted it for indexing only a particular gallery in PBase

Step 1: Create an account as master.com
Step 2: Configure your site search

Once you login to your newly created account, Click on 'Overall Site' in the Configuration tab on the left.



Ensure that you have enabled the checkbox for 'Search your site' - this ensures that master.com only displays an interface for searching *within* your site - which is what we want.

Step 3: Specify your filters

This part is key. Click on 'Search your site' in the Configuration tab on the left. Make sure that the 'Base Url' text box has your PBase gallery URL. In the Extensions textbox specify '.html.htm' - this tells the search that it should only search your site for content in your HTML pages (which means all your gallery and image pages)

In the 'Exclusions' section, specify

```
cgi-bin/
/guestbook
/root&view=recent
/root&view=tree
/profile
?
/medium
/large
/small
/original
add_comment
view=tree
exif=Y
exif=N
```

TOOL WATCH:

Everyone knows how useful the Firefox Webdev toolbar is for making live CSS changes. IE users sorely lacked such a tool and the recently released Microsoft web developer toolbar is sorely lacking on the live CSS editing front. We came across a free tool called CSS Vista that provides live CSS editing for both IE and Firefox in a split window. Though I could not get it to work for Firefox 1.5, it works well with IE.

Disclaimer: The tool is very beta, so bugs are not ruled out. Even so, it was great to finally be able to do live CSS editing in IE.

The above is critical. The above list makes sure that search does not find duplicate entries. Basically, what we are telling master.com is that if there is any link within your galleries that end with any of the above, it should not be indexed. If you have any galleries which you don't want to expose to search, specify just the names here (like /my_private1 etc.) . Note that if your galleries are marked private in PBase, master.com's search will not index them, so don't worry about protected galleries. Also please make sure that there are no stray spaces after each line - otherwise the exclusions will not work properly.

Step 4: Add the search to your site

You are done with the basic setup. You can do more by changing the search appearance and other interesting things. I will not get into it in this tutorial.

Click on 'Sample Forms & HTML' in the configuration tab on the left and master.com will show you the code you need to enter in your PBase gallery. Copy the code in the 'Form' dialog box and paste it in the user description area of your PBase root gallery. (Make sure you have html checkbox enabled in PBase in the user description area). This will create a search box that will only search *your* PBase galleries.

SILLY PBASE TRIVIA

- Did you know that besides 'small' 'medium' 'large' and 'original', there was also a 'gigantic' ?
  See
  http://www.pbase.com/stfchallenge/image/582129

- Did you also know there seems to be another size called '1' ?
  http://www.pbase.com/slug/image/20933/original

- Which is the earliest PBase gallery ?
  My take is that its Slug's Cancer Girls at http://www.pbase.com/gallery?gallery_id=2 (there is none with id=1 and 0 is your inbox !)

- The earliest PBase image ?
  http://www.pbase.com/image/3

- The mystery of PBase 'rolls' (pointed out by Alan Grant)
  http://www.pbase.com/wyk/rolls

- Does PBase allow MPEG files to be uploaded ?
  See
  http://www.pbase.com/slug/image/323348

- Did you know that the name of the PBase servers are JARO, JILL, JILIK, JOGO,JINKO, JOBI, JIKI, JAMA, JENKI and JACK ?
  See
  http://www.pbase.com/slug/pbase_servers

Do you have a question related to PBase's HTML/CSS controls ? Please feel free to email and ask us !

Please email your comments and suggestions to magazine@pbase.com

Parting Shots

"Parting Shots" is a carte-blanche section where we invite our co-editors to pen their thoughts. Eric is back again as the co-editor for this issue. So this space belongs to him.

We all know the expression, "I love you so much I can sing!" Well when I sat down to write this issue's Parting Shots, I realized that I loved PBase and this magazine so much, I could rhyme! The only problem is that I am anything but a poet. So with a dictionary in hand I wrote my feelings about this web site and magazine that I think is shared by most of you. Enjoy!

The PBase Rhyme
by Eric Kuhn

"It's the fourth issue of PBase Magazine
And our buzz has already created a scene.
You are now done, you have reached the end
You've become an expert in photography, my friend!

We teach you tips on using PhotoShop
Such as how to crop,
Or shoot the perfect backdrop
Ready to show off to Mom and Pop.

Some of the photographs we feature
Serve, to you, as a wonderful teacher.
They will leave you in awe
Unable to close that dropped jaw!

We interview photographers who like to free-lance
And this issue we remembered one from France.
Toussaint who shot in black and white
Was best known for his shots at night.

If you show off your best photos taken in your groove
You can count on comments from people who approve.
If you don't like their advice, just click "Remove"
But remember: everyone's critique may help you improve.

We are the members of the PBase Community
Which creates for us quite a unity
Giving to everyone equal opportunity,
And those around the world, diplomatic immunity.

A special thanks to Arjun, our Editor-in-Chief
Who can now breathe a sigh of relief.
For he can be proud of a job well done
And we can agree this was a hole in one!

And of course kudos are owed to Emily and Slug
Who run this web site and deserve a hug
For their brilliant creation of PBase:
Which now is a truly phenomenal place!

Here it is: The Pbase Rhyme
I hope it hasn't taken too much of your time.
So until our next publication,
Keep up the great photo dedication!"

Eric Kuhn

Do you know some people who you believe offer sage advice ?

We are always on the lookout for high-quality articles to be featured in our *Learning, Photoshopography* and *Gear Talk* sections. If you would like to refer someone to us for consideration for these sections, please drop us an email at magazine@pbase.com !

How do I contribute ?

If you think you would like to contribute, just email us with a specific idea. Please do not email us asking "what can I do to help ?". Honestly, we would not know the answer to that question.

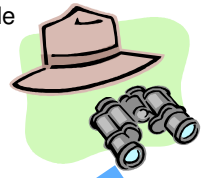
Instead, if you can propose a concrete idea, it makes it easier for us to be specific in return.

BACKSTAGE: The Process

We get a lot of mails from readers asking us how we work as a team, how many professional editors we employ, whether we have a payroll for our team and other such frightful things. Well, to make it simple, here is our professional and well thought out workflow for creating our magazine.

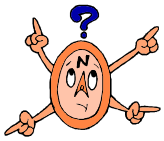
1: We start by being completely clueless on what to do for the magazine

2: We search far and wide for people who we can approach to feature in the next issue (often called forum leeching)

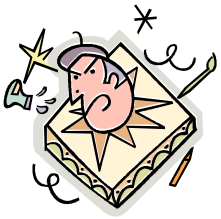


2: Alternately, we receive emails from people about others to feature, or from people about why we really should feature themselves

3: The editors then go into complete hibernation, forgetting that they have a magazine to work on



4: We wake up at the 11th hour and realize that nothing is in place yet



5: What follows then is a lot of last minute pleading with the contributors who till now are completely exasperated that we haven't responded to them yet. We fake our case by saying we were 'neck deep in work'

5: Our resident artist gets to work on his cover design and subjects himself to excruciating pain in designing the perfect cover page. We hear he likes working under pain.

6: Hastily patched up magazine articles are sent off to our proof-reader who goes wild in correcting what the editors should have really 'edited'.

7: The magazine finally takes some shape and is then prettied up, converted to PDF and released !

8: Some readers love our efforts, some are confused why we do what we do, and usually, Apple/Mac users are always screaming at us for making a magazine that has a hard time being read on their computers.

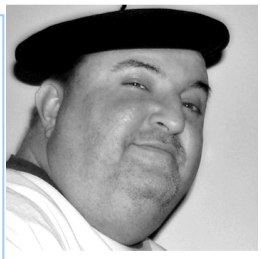
GET-TO-KNOW: The Magazine Team

We thought it would be fun for our readers to get to know the various folks behind this voluntary magazine effort.

Wanda Bates (proof reading)**:** I was born and raised in central Utah. In my 45 years I have grown to love animals and the great outdoors. I've been married to Bill for 25 years. We're now 'empty nesters' our children are grown and married. I'm active locally and nationally with the Miata/MX5 clubs and a past president of the Utah Miata Club.

I currently work part time for a florist and occasionally still model for my loving husband Bill. Oh and I correct the spelling of writers for PBase Magazine when they need it.

Gary Blanchette (cover design): Born in Illinois and raised in Southern California, I have been happily married to the same woman 32 years now, and am the proud father of three successful children. Not being one to take orders well, I have found that freelancing in the graphic field has worked well for me. As some have discovered, I tend to be a little outspoken when it comes to things I believe in. I hope I haven't made too many enemies. I love photography, but love taking my images past the point of reality even more. I would just as soon change the color of an eye to pink as to leave it natural blue. This is probably why I coined the term “Photoshopography”. I believe the camera and programs such as Photoshop go hand in hand. Currently I am taking classes in an attempt to better my all around skills. At the moment I enjoy the work of fellow PBaser Sergiusz Szuszyn. I also love the work of David Mendelsohn (not a PBaser as far as I know). His use of rich, bold colors is simply awesome.



Larena Woodmore (PDF conversion)**:** I am currently working as a software administrator in Western Australia. My employer is about to be split into four new companies, so I'm currently terribly busy preparing to split our document management database four ways. When I'm not at work I grow vegetables and Australian native plants, both of which attract a huge variety of bugs for me to photograph. I live with my boyfriend of ten years, and two cats.

Eric Kuhn (co-editor)**:** I am a freshman at Hamilton College, studying Public Policy and Communications. My passion for journalism (in television, radio, and newspapers) has allowed me to interview people such as Reverend Al Sharpton, Donald Trump, former Senator Bob Kerrey, CNN’s Jack Cafferty, CNN International’s Richard Quest, and *New York Times* Op-Ed columnist Frank Rich. (To listen to some of my interviews, please visit www.erickuhnshow.blogspot.com). When not posting on PBase I write for three Blogs, have worked on numerous political campaigns, love to ski, and work avidly to help better the lives of New York City’s homeless. Living right outside the City, I enjoy going to the theatre, museums, dinner, or just simply walking around (camera in hand, of course)! It has been a true honor and joy to write for Pbase Magazine this year.

Arjun Roychowdhury (co-editor)**:** I truly believe the world hasn’t yet made a camera that is worthy of me. After all, I just cannot understand why the photos I take never come out as I intend. Till such a camera is invented, I prudently decided to focus on working on a magazine about photography rather than imposing my photography skills on others. In my professional life, I work as a Director of Technology in a communications company here in Maryland. When my colleagues are not looking, I maintain my own blog on corporate management and technology trends here. (not that anyone necessarily reads it – I just feel great about myself). My motto in life – “*What, me worry ?*” (Alfred E. Neuman, MAD)

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for
reading
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